REPORT OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS
AND
SEVEN BACKGROUND PAPERS

IYSH·1987

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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UBC

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PROCEEDINGS

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A PLACE TO CALL HOME:
A Conference on Homelessness in British Columbia

OPENING REMARKS: H.P.Oberlander - Director, Centre for Human Settlements, UBC

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Stephen Lewis - Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations

PANEL DISCUSSION: Arthur Fallick, Research Associate, Centre for Human Settlements, UBC

J. David Hulchanski, Professor, School of Community and Regional Planning, UBC

Rosemary Brown, Professor, Women's Studies, SFU

WORKSHOPS:

Refugees	Physically Disabled
Native Indians	Mentally Disabled
Youth	Seniors
Women	Mentally Ill
Farmworkers	Single Room Occupants
	Transients

SUMMARY: Michael Clague - Director, Social Planning and Research Council of B.C.

Glenn Drover - Head, School of Social Work, UBC

Arthur Fallick and J. David Hulchanski

CLOSING ADDRESS: Seno Cornely - Vice-President, International Council on Social Welfare

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	Arthur Fallick

PREFACE

In June 1976, when Habitat, the United Nations' Conference on Human Settlements was held in Vancouver, the Canadian government, and its provincial counterparts, recognized the crisis in human settlements.

In May 1987, when the B.C. Conference on Homelessness met in Vancouver, there was widespread agreement among participants that the condition of human settlements had not improved during the eleven intervening years. In fact in British Columbia, the problem of homelessness had worsened.

The Conference, which was sponsored by fourteen housing and social service organizations throughout the province, had three objectives: (i) to observe IYSH by highlighting homelessness in the public media; (ii) to encourage a network of exchange among the various groups concerned with housing needs; and (iii) to promote the improvement of housing and social policies in B.C.

The first objective was achieved by inviting Stephen Lewis, Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, and Dr. Seno Cornely, Vice President of the International Council on Social Welfare, Brazil, as keynote speakers.

Lewis, in his address to the 240 Conference participants, dramatized the plight of the over 1 billion people who are homeless or living in squalor throughout the world. He linked the problem of homelessness in Canada and the third world with the massive international commitment to military expenditures. He foresaw no immediate solution to the problem even though he believed the economic resources already exist to reduce homelessness.

Cornely, drawing upon his personal experience in Brazil, highlighted the relationship between economic exploitation and homelessness. He documented how unemployment, delinquency, prostitution, and human degradation in the festering barrios of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro were directly related to limited public expenditures occasioned by the enormous public debt of his country. He, nevertheless, remained optimistic that improvements were possible if residents could become sufficiently politicized to take greater control of their residential environments. He indicated that many lawyers, social workers, public health specialists, and housing experts were working to that end.

The second objective was met through a series of eleven conference workshops which focussed on homelessness in B.C.. The workshop topics included refugees, Native Indians, youth, women, farm workers, the physically disabled, the mentally disabled, seniors, the mentally ill, single-room occupants, and transients. Workshop leaders took as a starting point that the homeless were not only people without shelter or in need of temporary accommodation, but also those whose limited command over economic resources placed then 'at risk'.

In each of the workshops, participants considered problems and solutions. For street kids, the need was identified as emergency housing and support services within a positive peer environment. For farm workers, it meant basic accommodation and human rights. For the disabled, it implied

specialized services and a housing registry. For abused women, it necessitated long term housing and education for employment. For single room occupants, it involved security of tenure and adequate housing codes. In all these workshops, there was also a recognition of the value of mutual support.

It was, however, the third objective of the conference - to improve B.C. housing and social policies - which both attracted and frustrated participants at the same time. The attraction was due to the overwhelming concern about the need for government policy to confront the problems of homelessness. The frustration was caused by the limited response of the B.C. government to the need expressed.

According to a background report prepared by David Hulchanski of the School of Community and Regional Planning, UBC, about 25 percent of British Columbia households were in need of housing assistance in 1986. A more conservative government estimate acknowledged a hard core problem of at least 16.3 percent of households.

In spite of this gap, however, provincial housing programs have decreased in B.C. over the past decade and non-profit housing has been under attack by provincial politicians. The problem of homelessness has also been compounded by low housing starts, and in areas like Vancouver, low vacancy rates.

Representatives of the B.C. Ministry of Social Services and Housing, who attended the Conference, claimed that the minister, Claude Richmond, was sensitive to the problems of the homeless but they also had no new initiatives to announce to the assembled audience.

Participants were not visibly surprised by the provincial stance. Since 1983, they have come to expect little of the B.C. government. Indeed, rather than casting stones at provincial messengers, there was almost a grudging admiration of senior bureaucrats who were required to project a positive provincial image even though programs were cut and resources diminished.

But then, as some participants wryly remarked, B.C. has recently become a policy fantasyland, where words are usually more colourful and plentiful than action. Still, reform has to begin some place, even where it is least expected!

The Organizing Committee

OPENING REMARKS

H. PETER OBERLANDER

Director, Centre for Human Settlements
University of British Columbia

Eleven years ago, Vancouver played host to the world when four thousand delegates representing 140 countries participated in HABITAT '76. At that time the world focussed for the first time on man's physical environment-housing, water, services, and the plight of the cities globally - in the first world, the second world, and the third world. In fact, Barbara Ward focussed our attention that there was only one world, indivisible, interactive, and interdependent, and that we were all responsible for each other.

What has happened since then? Quite a lot - but not enough. Five years ago, the UN General Assembly once again endeavored to focus the world's attention and raise our consciences and consciousness, and decided to designate 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). The focus is clearly on the poorest of the poor, and those without a home as the essential space for the individual and the family, based on security of occupancy and security of personal life.

Canada played a key role in persuading member nations to accept the UN initiative and has worked hard since then:

(1) to articulate the issues, causes and effect;

(2) to urge global consideration of the issues;

(3) to encourage each country to look into itself and discover solutions appropriate to its own shelter, housing and settlement needs.

Five years ago, homelessness would have referred to something that happened in Bangladesh, or in the Sudan, or in Mexico City. Now we know it also means Washington, D.C., New York, Chicago, Seattle, and Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.

Taking homelessness literally, we are talking about a person without a home, without an address, without personal security, without privacy, a person continuously on the move, haunted and hunted, hiding from himself and the personal shame that society has attached to him, or hiding from society as a whole. The proverbial bag-lady, clutching her meagre possessions and shifting from park bench to park bench, and from crowded shelter to crowded shelter, is both reality and a symbol in most Canadian cities. But homelessness is more than a shelter problem. Homelessness is life in disarray.

For the past eighteen months we at UBC have studied cause and effect of homelessness in Canada. There are multiple causes:

(a) no money, no job

(b) no shelter, no access to vital services, and deteriorating health

(c) no training, no prospects

As varied as the causes of homelessness are, so are the homeless themselves. They vary from city to city, from region to region, and are changing over time and with the seasons. In Vancouver there are at least five sources contributing to a person's risk of becoming homeless:

(1) 'Terminal City' - the end of the line

(2) Seasonal and chronic unemployment (20% versus Toronto's 10%)

(3) Physical health

(4) Mental health

(5) Native population.

The old vagrant or bum opting out of society and into a bottle is no longer, if it ever was, an adequate description or stereotype. For instance, the largest growing group of homeless is the single-led family- the young women with young children.

While homelessness is a growing Canadian urban problem, fortunately it is not hopeless; we have some successful approaches across Canada, particularly in Vancouver. These have been initiated primarily by volunteer associations, church groups, and charitable organizations. These groups have managed to organise existing buildings and build new ones for the specific needs of the homeless, and provide them with opportunities to put their lives together again, over weeks, months or years, but ultimately to re-enter the mainstream of Canadian society, stand on their own feet, look after themselves and manage their life with dignity and restored confidence in the future.

We shall hear how these things work during tomorrow's workshops, but one lesson is clear among those solutions we have studied. The variety of the homeless require a variety of solutions, and these solutions demand the co-operation between various components of Canadian society and their governments. Any valid solution discovered to date is a result of a partnership between six elements: we need the Federal Government - they tend to have the money; the Provincial Government - they tend to have the jurisdiction and the social and health facilities; the Municipalities often have the land, control standards , and can co-ordinate federal/provincial resources for a given situation locally.

These three partners need three more: the provision of shelter, old or new,

clearly involves the construction industry, the investment community, and the private sector generally; the voluntary and co-operative sectors have already demonstrated their leadership role in assisting the homeless; and last but by no means least, the homeless themselves have to be involved in a partnership in solving their own problems. The consumer must be involved in producing his own home.

Having just returned from Nairobi where the UN Commission on Human Settlements, for their Tenth Anniversary session focussed on IYSH, let me assure you that homelessness is now a global issue. In Nairobi, 108 nations met for two weeks to tackle, on an international scale, the rapidly expanding and complex issues. I am proud to report that Canada led the way, both in raising national and international awareness and in urging nations to examine their own problems in the context of their own needs, with national and international resources.

HONOURABLE STEPHEN LEWIS

CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED NATIONS

I ask myself occasionally, in contemplation of a speech, why one does these things with regularity, quite apart from the job? Because there is a certain psychological self-immolation here. This question of homelessness in the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, can be a profoundly depressing issue. I am not going to pretend that there are evident solutions on the horizon, because there are not. It is depressing within the context of the United Nations, because the United Nations is a crucible, a place where there is a perpetual litany of the human predicament in a way which is very depressing as well - you end up talking about the arms race, and South Africa, and Iran/Iraq, Afghanistan and Cambodia, and Cyprus and Central America, and massive famine, and the inheritance of economic dislocation in every place on the globe, and then you add to that the phenomenon of homelessness as it is given its emphasis in 1987, and it is profoundly unsettling.

I am not going to deal in self-indulgent palliatives. The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless raises questions that run to the heart of the human condition and for which answers are not in any sense evident. I have no doubt that the international community in earnest would wish to do something for homelessness, but by god, in my experience, I have little evidence to demonstrate that internationally the world community is engaged hardly at all.

The International Year of Shelter for the Homelessness is a way of consciousness raising around the world. These 'International Years' are quite fascinating and one wonders how symbolic they are, how real they are, and what the conjunction of events is. The IYSH however, is a year where one might actually do something concrete. It is a year where the issues are so urgent and the necessary responses so passionately held that perhaps we might evidence a break-through. The issues are so overwhelming.

Let me take you back to the formulation of the IYSH. It came together in 1982 in the UN General Assembly with a resolution introduced by Sri Lanka. The Prime Minister of Sri Lanka said at the time "The provision of adequate housing, which is the objective of the Year, is a basic aspect in the global assault on poverty." Poverty and homelessness may not be identical, but poverty is a pre-condition for homelessness, and in the minds of most of the international community, certainly in the minds of most of the developing world, poverty is really what we are talking about. Homelessness is an excruciating manifestation of impoverishment. IYSH was meant to work on a national level. It is felt that the individual countries who make up the UN Commission on Human Settlements, 159 of them, will initiate certain demonstration projects, will take a hard look at what they are doing, will hold conferences like this one and the one in September which is upcoming, and will attempt somehow to unleash intelligence, creativity and commitment, in a way that will go some

measure towards solving the problem. And the problem of course, as everyone here knows, is that it is so extraordinary. It ranges so widely that it is hard to encompass it. The definition of absolute homelessness[1] extends, so it is estimated, to one-hundred-million people on this earth. Absolute and total homelessness. No shelter of any kind. The definition of homelessness in terms of inadequate shelter and people at risk of ultimate homelessness, extends to a billion people on the face of the earth. One out of every four. And then related to homelessness you have the phenomena which it induces: for example, death by malnutrition and disease; factors which flow from homeless conditions in urban society, including the death of 50,000 children under the age of 5 every day. Deaths which are largely unnecessary. Deaths which can be prevented. Lives which can be saved by the universal programme of immunisation which the World Health Organization and UNICEF are jointly engaged in, and by a massive concentrated assault on the urban complexes which are developing at an extraordinary human cost. There are more than 20 million street children in Latin America alone, and squatter settlements all over the world in urban centres, where you might have 1,000 people whose water is drawn from the same single standing pipe. Ninety percent of those people in clumps of 1,000 all over the world, have absolutely no way to hygienically dispose of human waste. We are talking about a contagion which begins with the phenomenon of homelessness and then spreads outward to hopelessness.

Let me make my first comment about International commitment. You are no doubt aware that the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) was initiated after the Habitat Conference, held here in Vancouver in 1976, and is the lead agency for IYSH activities. Because the UN wanted to make the administration of IYSH reasonably modest, it was scheduled to embrace only 4.5 million dollars, and it was said at the time in goodwill that 50% of the money would come from developing countries and 50% from the developed countries. What has happened is that 80% has come from the developing world and 20% from the developed countries. In fact the IYSH probably would not have happened if Sri Lanka had not given a million dollars at the outset! It will please you to know that when Canada in 1983 gave a $300,000 contribution, it was not only the first but subsequently the largest of most western contributions, and it is therefore worth recognising that whenever one struggles around these issues there are always those who profess adherence but who behave with unbridled delinquency.

As we entered the International Year in January 1987 we had managed to undertake internationally 360 demonstration projects, and those are indigenous demonstration projects. They range in every aspect from full cost recovery of individual housing projects in certain Asian societies, to rent control experiments in certain African societies, through to the question of housing specifically to accommodate the needs of women in a number of African and Latin American societies. Let me tell you how the 360 projects break down: 124 of them are in Africa; 96 of them are in Asia; 54 are in Latin America and the Caribbean; and 16 are in the Middle East. This gives you the sense of priorities in the developing world. Then the developed countries decided that they would support a number of demonstration projects to build houses or to improve housing or to engage co-operative or voluntary housing amongst the homeless in various

developing societies. There are seventy such projects, and this will give you some pleasure, as it gives me pleasure, because Canada's record in these areas is pretty good. Of the seventy projects, 21 of them are funded by Canada; 12 by the United States; 11 by France; 4 by Denmark; and then there is a hodge-podge of other benefactors. But it is worth noting again that Canada stands in the forefront of those western countries which are willing to make this kind of international commitment.

Many of the organizations that are supporting this gathering have documented the situation in Canada with very considerable accuracy and poignancy, and I remind you that in this country it is generally agreed that there are 20-40,000 human beings who are perpetually homeless. I do not understand it! This is a profoundly rich society. I have been spending up to 50 percent of my time wandering around the world over the last 8 or 9 months, much of it on the continent of Africa. The comparisons are beyond the capacity of language to deliver. In this country with our resources, to have 20-40,000 people continue to be homeless is almost beyond imagination, let alone credulity. And in addition, the composition of the homeless has changed profoundly over the last 20 or 25 years. You now have a very considerable proportion of disaffected young people. There are all kinds of young people in the age bracket of 18-25 who are homeless. I ask myself the aching question, how is that possible? How does one sustain this in a country like Canada? But it is alas sustained. You also have a large group of single parent families - mothers with children. How is that possible in a civilised and wealthy and decent and humane society? You have a huge number of people at risk, maybe not absolutely homeless yet, represented by older women, living alone in desolate lives. There are now large numbers of people who are wandering about homeless or at risk of being homeless as a result of the de-institutionalisation of psychiatric and related facilities. It is not as though these problems were not anticipated. We all understood what community mental health meant. We all understood the value of people returning to the community. We all understood that the community had to be prepared to receive them. It was a matter of public debate in Canada, provincially at least for some decades. And then precisely at the moment vulnerable human beings are discharged into the community there are no facilities to receive them. What kind of public policy is that? What kind of rationality? And why does it take so long to absorb the lessons that were writ large 25 years ago?

Then of course there are large groups of unemployed persons, who also inhabit the world of the homeless and the world of those at risk. I have again just read the Canadian Council on Social Development statistics on poverty, and realised that there is not a single jurisdiction in Canada, whose social assistance allowances for any category of person and family meets the poverty level. Not one! If that is the case in this rich, civilised and enlightened country in which we live, how can people not be at risk? How can you possibly have a home which is in any sense an on-going and permanent possession? That is why 15 percent of the families in Canada, and 34-38 percent of unattached individuals in Canada are below the poverty line - amounting to something like 4 million Canadians - which has come down a little in the last survey from StatsCan. But it is still an affront, not merely to human dignity, but to the simple matter of logic and rationale. And then if all that were not enough, the stock of available

housing, particularly in the inner-city cores of so many cities from Ottawa to Vancouver, is depleting on a regular basis.

So what does it mean to the homeless or those who risk homelessness? The phenomenon of poverty remains ubiquitous in far too many areas of this country and to this day I will never fully understand it. I believe that when one sees an injustice which is so palpable and so clear it is not beyond human ingenuity to handle it. And I also believe profoundly that there can be, in an appropriate ordering of society, the resources to respond internally in a country, just as it is possible to respond internationally, if there was the political will. But there is not the political will.

Now without diminishing the injustice of what is happening within Canada, it is necessary to say that the position here of course pales in comparison with the developing world, and this is where my spirits sag. Vancouver had a conference of the Municipal Federation of Canada (Federation of Canadian Municipalities) and had Margaret Catley Carson as a speaker, and she said 'that the tide of urbanization and related homelessness is irreversible.' It was not a statement of cosmic despair. It was just a statement of evident truth. And this irreversible tide of urbanization and homelessness that goes with it is of course becoming ever more grotesque and ever more difficult to deal with, with every passing year. Urban growth around this world is increasing at 6 percent per annum. There was a fascinating study done by the World Bank in 1984 on matters of population, demography, etc, looking at all the factors - birthrate, deathrate, immigration, and it came to the conclusion that the 6 percent figure was absolutely reliable. Which means that in the developing world, the urban centres will double; the urban population will double within the next 30 years.

I was in Brazzaville in the Congo just a couple of months ago. Do you know that in the Congo, 70 percent of the citizens are now in Brazzaville? To handle that kind of urban pressure is of course entirely beyond the means of the country, which is struggling so desperately for simple economic survival, let alone any sophisticated administrative and economic infrastructure to handle that kind of urban concentration. And that pattern is developing everywhere. By the turn of the century, most of us will live in cities. This will be the first time in human history that such a thing has ever happened. By the turn of the century the urban centres will have increased their population by another 1.5 billion people, and the majority of them (1.2 billion) will be in the developing world. By the year 2000 there will be twenty-five of these extraordinary mega-cities across the world, and only three of them will be in Europe and North America. All the rest will be in the developing world. Cities of over 1 million, of which there are now 200, will amount to 600 by the year 2000, and 500 of them will be in the developing world. Do you see what is happening over the next 10, 20, 30 years? I think one of Margaret Catley Carson's references was particularly germane "in the year 2000 there will be 131 million babies born, and 125 million will be in the developing world".

Now, as this massive concentration continues, and as we have the Mexico City's and the Sao Paulo's of 25- and 30-millions of people, how does one deal with the excruciating consequences? Because there, one has the basis,

not just for disease, but for civil strife, revolution, for mass movements of people, for environmental refugees who are moving across this world on various continents as a result of environmental onslaught and internal dislocation. All of that is the phenomenon of the next 25 - 30 years, and one simply does not know how to handle it, or how to respond to it. Despite the fact that these trends have been known since Stockholm in 1972 and Vancouver in 1976, and the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1983, despite the fact that it has been absolutely identifiable and irrefutable for the last 15 years. Let me tell you about the commitment of the International community. We are spending, at this moment, 1 billion dollars of our foreign aid each year on matters relating to the construction of new housing, or the improvement of existing stock, or the involvement of co-operative or voluntary groups in the process. That represents 2% of the total aid flow to the third world. That is the international commitment. If you want to take it one step further, we are spending 2 billion dollars a year to provide clean water, and hygienic disposal of human waste. That represents 4% of the total aid flow to the developing world in 1986-87. That is the commitment of the international community. And we are reaching, so it is estimated, something like 5% of the urban population in the developing world. And it is getting worse, all over the developing world, partly because some of them are in such aggrieved and difficult circumstances, that in order to rehabilitate their economies, they are required to engage in what are called 'structural adjustment programmes' imposed upon them by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, or entered into in conjunction with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. These structural adjustment programmes have very difficult human and social consequences.

In Africa, in order to make the move from wrenching famine to economic recovery, 25 African countries have now embraced structural adjustment programmes; they have done it in conjunction with the Bank and the Fund. These structural adjustment programmes are very difficult for the countries that take them on. They are deep and visceral structural and economic reforms. They carry great political risks. They carry serious human dimensions to what is being done. In a country like Ghana structural adjustment programmes mean a devaluation of the currency by 5,600 percent in a period of 2 years. It means the laying-off of thousands of public servants, creating unemployment. It means cutting back the cocoa marketing board by 29,000 additional public servants. It means removing subsidies to urban prices, which in Zambia led to food riots in December of 1986 and as recently as ten days ago, the repudiation of the IMF programme by President Kaunda of Zambia, because his country simply could not handle it. It means the dismantling of state and para-statal organizations with consequent unemployment. In some countries it has meant rising infant mortality rates, and if it was not for magnificent organizations like UNICEF which acts as the conscience of the world where women and children are concerned, I dare say that the human face of structural adjustment would be heeded hardly at all. But these structural adjustment programmes which are now endemic across Africa, and very much in evidence in other parts of the world, are the ways in which these developing countries are desperately endeavoring to put themselves on the path of economic recovery. So on the one hand you have the phenomenon of homelessness writ large across the international community; on the other hand you have the phenomenon of urbanization and population growth which further prejudices the possibility

of shelter; on the third hand you have economies struggling with inadequate foreign aid, crippling debt-service payments, poor commodity prices for their goods so they never have any foreign exchange to build the economy internally, and then on top of it all, you have social and human consequences which exacerbate the problem. It is not easy. It is in fact quite desperate.

All of this was known to everyone not merely 15 years ago, but certainly two weeks ago - why two weeks ago? Two weeks ago there emerged on the international community the Brundtland report, 'Our Common Future' the International Commission on Environment and Development. It is a magnificent document, on balance a really estimable piece of work. And it has a chapter on population and one on urbanization which can make you weep. It is not extravagant in its prose, in fact it is pretty pedestrian, but it is just very straightforward. I want to read to you what these 22 people from 22 countries around the world, over three years of travelling across the globe, listening to submissions, commissioning expert papers, and examining the results say.

> These projections put the urban challenge firmly in the developing countries. In the space of just 15 years, or about 5,500 days, the developing world will have to increase by about 65% its capacity to produce and manage its urban infrastructure, services, and shelter, merely to maintain present conditions.[2]

Now under the circumstances I just described to you, do you really think that in the next 15 years these developing countries are going to be able to increase their capacity by 65% simply to keep things at present levels? And in many countries this must be accomplished under conditions of great economic hardship and uncertainty with resources diminishing relative to need, and rising expectations. So bad is the diminution of resources on the African continent that in the year of the greatest consequences of the famine, 1985, 2 billion dollars more went out than came in. It went out in payment largely to debt-servicing obligations. Do you know that in countries in Africa now, loans from the World Bank are used to pay the debt obligations to the IMF? I heard a senior Ghanian say rather acidly last week 'Why don't they just cross the street in Washington, and give them the money, rather than routing it through Accra?' A sad and bitter question and not easily answered.

Few city governments in the developing world have the power, resources and trained staff to provide their rapidly growing populations with the land, services and facilities needed for an adequate human life - clean water, sanitation, schools and transport. The result is mushrooming illegal settlements with primitive facilities, increased overcrowding, and rampant disease linked to an unhealthy environment. In most third world cities the enormous pressure for shelter and services has frayed the urban fabric, much of the housing used by the poor is decrepit, civic buildings are frequently in a state of disrepair and advanced decay. So too is the essential infrastructure of the city; public transport is over-crowded and over-used, as are roads, busses and trains, transport stations, public latrines and wash points. Water supply systems are weak, and the resulting low water pressure allows sewage to seep into drinking water; a large proportion of the city population often has no piped water, storm drainage

or roads. Forgive me for constantly using analogies drawn from Africa, but it is the continent with which, at the moment, I am most familiar. All of this reality is further and grotesquely complicated in the southern part of the continent by the de-stabilization of all of those front-line states by South Africa, by the prosecution, effectively, of a war against all of the surrounding countries. And when you add war and civil strife to this extraordinary predicament, it is not immediately evident to me what the answer is.

A growing number of the urban poor suffer from a high incidence of diseases, most of which are environmentally based, and could be prevented or dramatically reduced by a relatively small investment. Acute respiratory diseases, tuberculosis, intestinal parasites, linked to poor sanitation and contaminated drinking water, diarrhoea, hepatitis, typhoid, are usually endemic, in fact they are usually one of the major causes of death, especially amongst children. In parts of many cities, poor people can expect to see one in four of their children die of serious malnutrition before the age of 5, or one adult in two suffering intestinal worms or serious respiratory infection. The report states:

> Out of India's 3,119 towns and cities, only 209 had partial and only 8 had full sewage and sewage treatment facilities. On the river Ganges, 114 cities each with 50,000 or more inhabitants dump untreated sewage into the river every day. DDT factories, tanneries, paper and pulp mills, petrochemical and fertilizer complexes, rubber factories, and a host of others use the river to get rid of their wastes. The Hoogly estuary (near Calcutta) is choked with untreated industrial wastes from more than 150 major factories around Calcutta. Sixty per cent of Calcutta's population suffer from penumonia, bronchitis, and other respiratory diseases related to air pollution.
>
> Chinese industries, most of which use coal in outdated furnaces and boilers, are concentrated around 20 cities and ensure a high level of air pollution. Lung cancer mortality in Chinese cities is four to seven times higher than in the nation as a whole, and the difference in largely attributable to heavy air pollution.[3]

And so the documentation continues, in an inexorable fashion. Those are the realities. Brundtland is unanswerable in the material which is provided.

We are faced in 1987, in this year of seeking shelter for the homeless, with problems that are so massive and complex that they are really intimidating. I suppose that the IYSH is crucial to driving the whole point home. But somehow this world, and particularly the developed countries, must re-order their priorities both internal and external. I personally feel oppressed but determined. It is a massive and Herculean task. It requires an incomparable act of political will. This phenomenon of homelessness, whether indigenous or external, is in fact the new symbol of North/South relationships. This is what it is all about, and we don't have at the moment anywhere in the world, a serious North/South dialogue. Nor do we have global negotiation, nor do we have the developed and the developing countries willing to sit down with each other to discuss how

these human dilemmas can be responded to. We seem to be willing to countenance unconscionable suffering before we respond. The glimmer on the horizon I see (so that this speech is not uniformly despairing) lies in the first conference which the United Nations has ever held on Disarmament and Development, which will begin in August and go through to September. It is the first time the nations of the world have been willing to sit down and concede at least on the part of the major powers, that there is a relationship between disarmament and development. In fact it is of course an essential, a visceral relationship. Because if we did not spend on armaments internationally, what we are now spending, then it would be possible to address the helplessness that has been delineated. Just as it is possible within Canada as a result of our wealth, to re-order priorities in order to respond to homelessness, so it is possible internationally, if the arms race can be contained and diminished, to provide sufficient funds to speak to the massive international human needs. But along the way there is all this incomparable suffering, and along the way we take a remarkable length of time to respond. I love the United Nations, because it is a body that never gives up, and it raises all these issues, and it does it with extraordinary idealism in the face of such monumental adversity. And that is why I support it, and that is why I like the fact that Canada is so active there, and that is why I appreciate that we are a country committed to multi-lateralism. But along with multi-lateralism, by god, goes evidence, internationally, of the willingness to transfer resources to countries which need them. And that willingness may be there in anticipation, it is not there in fact, it is indeed nowhere near it.

I wish you well in your deliberations.

NOTES

1. SHELTER OR HOMES? A Contribution to the Search for Solutions to Homelessness in Canada; A Progress Report. H. Peter Oberlander and Arthur L. Fallick, 1987, Vancouver, The Centre for Human Settlements, The University of British Columbia.

   See also the Background Papers prepared for the Conference, A PLACE TO CALL HOME, A Conference on Homelessness in British Columbia, May 15-16, 1987, General Editor, J.D. Hulchanski.

2. OUR COMMON FUTURE, The World Commission on Environment and Development, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Chairman. 1987, Oxford: Oxford University Press, page 237.

3. Our Common Future, page 240.

PANEL DISCUSSION

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

Arthur Fallick

I have been involved in the study of homelessness for the past two years as Research Associate at the Centre for Human Settlements here at UBC. Our research is a major part of the Canadian contribution to the IYSH. There are certain critical issues about homelessness which require serious consideration, and I would like to raise them with you this morning: Ambassador Lewis raised them last night, this panel will raise them now, your workshops will address them. From this conference and other presentations at the national conference in Ottawa next September, it is our hope that a clear position on the issues from British Columbia delegations will emerge, and that British Columbia will be a significant force in a nation wide commitment to eradicate homelessness and emancipate the homeless.

The critical issues are:

1. What is homelessness?

2. Who are - the homeless? -- the homeless?

3. What effective solutions - exist? -- are required?

These three sets of questions are inter-related in complex ways because they represent the foundations from which we can understand how the many causal issues are linked to the serious effects, and most importantly, how causes are linked to effective solutions.

My research over the past two years has convinced me of two things:

1. The homeless are not hopeless.

2. The conditions which contribute to the persistence of homelessness in Canada can be tackled, if there is the political will and the public commitment to work together as partners in addressing the complex processes which contribute to the problems.

These conclusions only really make sense if we can agree that there is a critical distincion between the words homeless and homelessness. Let me try to explain the distinction.

People are homeless! We should always use the word homeless as an adjective, that is, to describe an individual or a group: homeless youth, homeless women, homeless refugees.

Homelessness on the other hand refers to the structural conditions which result in people becoming homeless.

What I am trying to suggest is that in one limited sense, homelessness can be regarded as the "cause", whereas homeless people is the "effect" or the result of this process.

I will now limit my remarks to the question: What is homelessness? The reason for doing this, and the point which runs through all my remaining remarks, is that how the issue of homelessness is defined, in broad or narrow terms, significantly influences the actions which will be taken to deal with it, and with those who become homeless. Let me begin by focussing on what is perhaps the broadest, or at least the most ambitious definition - stated by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat):

> [Homelessness refers to] the millions of people with no home- the pavement dwellers, but the international year will also highlight the plight of the hundreds of millions who lack a real home - one which provides protection from the elements; has access to safe water and sanitation; provides for secure tenure and personal safety; is within easy reach of centres of employment, education and health care; and is at a cost which people and society can afford. Shelter is a global issue. It is not simply an issue of poverty. Urbanization, economic development and social policies all have direct effects on shelter conditions, and must be addressed.

From this definition, the United Nations developed two major objectives:

> First, to improve the shelter and neighbourhood needs of some of the poor by 1987.
>
> Secondly, to demonstrate ways to improve the shelter and neighbourhoods of <u>all</u> the poor by the year 2000.

The International Year is intended to be the basis for a long-term programme of action. The programme has two fundamental principles:

1. Action can only be effective in so far as it takes place at <u>both</u> the national and local levels.

2. Problems, needs, and solutions can only be appropriate to the extent that they are defined and implemented by the poor themselves, assisted by the technical expertise and material resources of local and national governments and agencies.

Let me now present two examples of narrow definitions from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development:

> -Homelessness refers to people in the streets.
>
> -Homeless people are distinguished from those who have permanent shelter even if that shelter is physically inadequate. They are also distinguished from those living in overcrowded conditions.

Thus, people with a roof over their heads are not homeless!

The Australian Housing Department views homelessness strictly as a housing problem - lack of quality, lack of security, or lack of permanence - it is regarded as a housing supply crisis, not tied to wider social, political and economic forces.

Let me now turn to some absurd definitions. From representatives of the Reagan administration we have been informed that:

1. No one in America is living in the streets;

2. Soup kitchen patrons are there because 'the food is free and that's easier than paying for it';

3. The problem of homelessness is directly correlated to the problem of alcohol or drug dependency;

4. From President Reagan himself: Those on the street are there 'you might say, by their own choice'.

Suffice it to say that these definitions have produced no actions to solve the problems!

What is the point behind all of this, you may well ask?

As I understand it, definitions are used to establish links between causes and effects, and to suggest specific courses of action. These actions become the legitimate solutions. In the USA for example, homelessness has been defined as an income problem, therefore income solutions are advanced (we know of hotels in run-down parts of cities being paid over $2,000 per week per person to shelter homeless people), and it is usually only the pavement dwellers who are officially recognized. In the UK, the problem has been considered to be one of housing, therefore housing solutions are proposed. In 1977 a Homeless Persons Act was passed which was intended to force local governments to provide for their homeless. However, the Act does not cover single people, childless couples, elderly who live with relatives or friends, people from broken marriages, families living in substandard, unaffordable or inappropriate dwellings (like bed and breakfast) or the so-called 'deliberately homeless' (that is, people who have rent or mortgage arrears or who are accused of becoming homeless to move up the enormous waiting list for Council houses). Thus, the definition of homelessness, and the limited range of people accepted as being needy, significantly influences the way a homeless person in Britain is treated.

If you are sleeping under a bridge, the local council is obliged to make permanent provision for you (providing you fall into the correct priority need catagory). If, however, you are a family with two children, forced to live in a single room of a guest house with nowhere to cook or wash, and sharing three bathrooms with thirty-six people, you are entitled to nothing!

In a conference on homelessness held by the European Common Market Countries in 1986, homelessness was defined as being equivalent to poverty and, as a result, the European Commission could offer no concrete course of action, because poverty is too vague a term to use to determine specific courses of action -- poverty results from a wide range of inter-related factors.

These definitions and related solutions are what I prefer to describe as 'partial or questionable' answers. In countries where single causes are proposed, I have found no evidence to show that homelessness is being reduced, or that the shelter and neighbourhood conditions of the poor and disadvantaged are improving significantly.

Now, what about the situation in Canada? The answer is confusing and confusion: (The confusion exists, and I usually make it sound confusing!)

**No federal or provincial government definitions have been made official

**definitions employed by non-governmental organizations often reflect specific agenda (usually professional or political) in response to the needs of their particular clientele

**there has been little substantive academic research on the issue -- with the exception of Dr. David Hulchanski, and the work of Dr. Peter Oberlander and myself at UBC.

The result is fragmented actions which either focus on:

1. Project responses - Build something! Or, to a lesser degree,

2. Programme responses -- usually in the form of community social services which usually must operate within excessive restraint budgets.

I am not suggesting that these responses are necessarily wrong. What I am arguing, however, is that they are not reinforced by a third and absolutely vital response - public policies by the appropriate levels of government- and the clear commitment to be active partners in searching for effective lasting solutions.

The fragmented (and often ad-hoc) efforts to address homelessness or help the homeless in Canada so far appear to be having only limited success. Homelessness remains a pervasive phenomenon, and the homeless are becoming increasingly more economically and socially diverse.

What worries me about this situation is that if a country like Canada, which is rich in resources and human potential, cannot seem to effectively deal with these problems, what chance do those in less fortunate countries have?

Let me finish with a brief discussion of homelessness in the context of British Columbia. I would like to make three basic points:

1. Homelessness in B.C. (as elsewhere across Canada) is relative. By that I mean that it is not the same as the situation being experienced in many third world countries, although it does share some common dimensions. It does result from the combined effects of social, economic, political and physical factors, including: poverty, inadequate income, inaffordable or substandard housing, lack of meaningful employment opportunities, inadequate social benefits, inappropriate policies of deinstitutionalization, urban change and conflict; and the differential standards which our society seems to be willing to tolerate for some of its members.

2. The causes of homelessness are as diverse as the homeless themselves. As a result of the various causes, there are throughout the Province, to varying degrees: people with no physical shelter; increasing numbers relying on emergency shelter for longer periods; people living in inappropriate or inadequate dwellings for which they must pay in excess of 30% of their income; and those whose housing security and stability is highly susceptible to changes in economic, housing, and social welfare policies. Within this continuum can be found increasing numbers of young people, particularly children, women and single-parent families.

3. My definition of homelessness in British Columbia:

> recognizing the relative nature of homelessness in Canada, and bearing in mind its diverse causes, homelessness is the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals or family groups have personal control and which satisfies the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security, at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social and economic public services.

My own research is now focussed on trying to develop a framework which can be used as part of a systematic and comprehensive program of action beyond this International Year of Shelter for the Homeless. I invite you today to become a part of that ongoing programme.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

David Hulchanski

Last night, when Stephen Lewis referred to the number of homeless in Canada as being 20-40,000, he said 'I do not understand this'. What he and I and you cannot understand is why a country like Canada in 1987, with its wealth and resources is here talking about homelessness, the rock bottom of the housing situation for Canadians. And yet here we are; and as the Ambassador said, it is a deeply depressing subject.

When you think about a family living in poverty, or around Christmas when the news media focus on specific cases, you can get some insight into their lives. That is one thing. But consider 65,000 families living in poverty - a small city really - that is the number of families in British Columbia in 1980 who were living in poverty. In 1984 it was 120,000 families, in addition to 150,000 single people. These 300,000 households represent about 27% of the population of our province and they are living in poverty. We have our social welfare system - GAIN - the number of people receiving GAIN increased from 125,000 in 1980 to 230,000 people in 1985. An assessment of the minimum basic cost of living which was done recently for B.C., shows that GAIN rates are 40 - 60% below the minimum required to secure the basic necessities of life. As Stephen Lewis said, there is no place in Canada where our social welfare system provides sufficient funds for people to live at even a minimum standard.

Last year there were 20,000 housing starts in B.C., up by about 4,000 from the previous year, but less than 200 were private, rental, non-subsidised starts. There were very few rental housing starts, and under 2,000 social housing starts. These are token numbers, particularly to 8,000 households in B.C. who remember the date October 1, 1983. This is when rents were raised on the poorest people in the Province, those who live in public housing, from 25% of their pensions or welfare payments, to 30%.

In thinking about what to say today, I considered the title: "After 50 years of housing programmes, why is homelessness a major problem in Canada?" In deciding what to say about this, I remembered an article I first came across about 15 years ago. It was simply entitled "Social Problems". This may not sound so special, but this was a 1925 article, and I have since learned that this is considered a classic by social scientists, one of the first to try to sort out the question of how our society at certain times, defines certain phenomena as problems. These phenomena exist, but at a certain stage we legitimate them as social problems. To illustrate his point, the author invoked the then familiar figure of a man coming from Mars in order to view current affairs in our society with an innocent eye. So his hosts patiently explained to this man from Mars, that we have many social problems here including a serious housing problem. The man from Mars sought to understand why this fundamental problem had not been solved long before, since we looked like we were able to do it. He asked what he thought were a number of very sensible questions: Is it a technical or design problem that architects

or engineers cannot overcome? Of course it is not. We export such technology and skill. Is there a shortage of labour? And of course we point today to 12-13% unemployment, so the answer is 'no'. Is it a shortage of building materials? In B.C. we would all roll our eyes and try to sell him some 2 x 4's! Is it a shortage of financing? People compete to lend mortgage money. Is it a shortage of land? Maybe in some places such as Tokyo or Hong Kong but in most places no. By then he was really confused - what really is the problem? And his hosts tried to be patient and explain all the complexities of why we have this housing problem. And they went on to explain other social problems. So then the man from Mars, after all this, said the following: If it is not indelicate of me to remark, all these social problems you describe have the same characteristics. The crux of the problem is to find some way of avoiding the undesirable consequences of your established laws, institutions, and social practices, without changing those established laws, institutions and social practices.

This is the first point I would make regarding the homeless issue and the workshops today. We need to think more broadly about the things we take for granted. Because that is where the problem begins. If we do not do this, nothing is going to change and we can come back here in ten years and have another conference and talk about the same things in the same way. Housing involves complex interconnections between all the major institutions and that is why it is such a difficult problem. It should be clear by now, however, that the solutions do not depend on the discovery of some new technique or some new skill or some new twist, or programme or something.

When we ask, after 50 years of housing programmes in Canada, why we still have serious housing problems, the answer is very clear. Our attempt as a society at solving this particular social problem has been to find ways of getting something done, improving housing conditions, while not interfering with the interests and activities of all those who are involved with the failure in the first place. It cannot be done. We have been trying for 50 years to keep everything the same and yet to try to help some people in something as complex as housing and it has not worked. This is again where Stephen Lewis is right. He referred a couple of times to our lack of political will. That is what is difficult to understand in a country as wealthy as Canada, when we see such extreme disparities, we do not have the political will to actually do something.

Consider where we would be as a society if we treated education and health care in the way we treat housing. I think we would be pretty dumb and sickly! Last century we defined education as a right - people under a certain age had a right to a good quality, free education; education became a right and a priority. In this century, health care became a right and a priority, and now all people have a right to good quality health care.

Both of these examples involved a tremendous change in our accepted practices. Both cost a great deal to implement, both are based on comprehensive policies, both are now part of the normal institutions and practices of our society, and neither area is now defined as a serious social problem. We fight over how to fine tune these things, which is a constructive fight. Concern is with how to improve the delivery of

education, and health care, not to deal with the fact that we have people dying in the streets, or the masses of people who are illiterate.

My second point then, in relation to housing, is that progress in both education and health care and other areas where we have made progress has only been made because we have done two things. We have recognised them as rights, and we have recognised our responsibilities. We recognised that all people have a right to education and health care, no matter what their income, race, or where they live. We recognise that society has a responsibility to see that education and health care needs are met, and that problems in their delivery are fixed up.

Housing does not have this status. That is why we have structured the workshops into specific groups. We have tried to be very concrete. What are the specific rights of these groups? What are the responsibilities of society to these groups who have been neglected in our housing system? for example refugees, natives, young, women, single parents, physically and mentally disabled, and so on. If housing had the status of a right and society viewed it as a responsibility, we would have made more progress over the last 50 years than we have. We have a very good housing system for meeting market demand. If you have money in your pocket and you want something in housing, you will get it. But we have no system for addressing social need in our housing sector. We have a variety of piecemeal, little programmes. From time to time they change and they deliver a few units of housing. That is all we have ever had. By 1964 there were only 12,000 social housing units in Canada.

My final point is - how can we begin to make progress? If our man from Mars went back home to write a research report on how earthlings in Canada address social problems, he would likely note that he observed five stages in the process of addressing a social problem. The first is that the problem has to be recognised. And thanks to the UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, and really no thanks to the bad conditions that prevail in the economy and public policy in B.C., homelessness is, to some extent, on the public agenda today in Canada and B.C.

The second stage is that the problem has to be legitimised. It has to aquire broad social legitimacy. There has to be broad agreement on its definition, and we have to identify potential solutions. This is the stage at which we are.

The third is that you mobilise forces to begin to address the problem. In the fourth stage you begin to develop a policy, a co-ordinated plan of action. And in the fifth stage you implement the plan. Education, health care, and most recently day-care have all gone through this process.

So in summing up: First, we need to examine institutions and practices. Second, we need to recognise rights and responsibilities. Third, we need to put housing issues on the public agenda, through education and political action. All this must be done however in a very concrete way, from the bottom up, and that is why we are here. How does a problem manifest itself in concrete ways? What are both short-term and long-term solutions to this problem? Each workshop should examine these points. What is/are the problem(s)? Where do these problems exist? What can or should be done about them, in the short term and long-term? How do we put this information on the public agenda? How do we generate a political will to take action? How do we, here, begin to work together to that end? Stephen Lewis remarked that the whole international exercise in the IYSH is an exercise in consciousness raising. I think we are here for mutual self-education.

ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

Rosemary Brown

Last night Stephen Lewis told us that there were really no evident solutions on the horizon and the fact that I have been asked to deal with solutions, tells you a little bit about how this Conference perceives me. Despite this we shouldn't give up, and I think we have to keep on searching for solutions, and we have to keep on testing ideas and trying different and innovative ways of addressing these problems, if for no other reason than it will get a lot worse if we do absolutely nothing. So if simply by trying out things we can hold the line, that is better than not doing anything at all. The other thing is that I believe his statement is absolutely accurate as far as the developing world is concerned, that in terms of their lack of resources, in terms of their crushing debt, in terms of the reality of not just the poverty in dollars and cents but in education and health care and high mortality rate, etc, that housing is always going to be a problem with them. But the solution to that problem lies with the developed world. And that is the reason why the presence of homelessness in a developed society, and a wealthy and affluent country such as ours which can spend billions of dollars on all kinds of irrelevances such as making weapons to blow ourselves apart, is absolutely obscene, immoral and something that we have to address.

So I would like to look at the question of solutions in terms of the ability to deal with them. We can deal with homelessness. We have homeless people in this country because we choose to, not because we have to. It is in fact a political decision. I want to talk about the way in which this political decision was arrived at in two ways. Politicians divide people into productive and non-productive. Productive people are those who generate tax income, which makes it possible for governments to be able to do the things that governments do, whether to meet social needs, or to build themselves monuments in their honour. The people who produce income are seen as productive people, and corporations and industry and wealthy entrepreneurs, and real estate agents and those kinds of people fit into this category. When governments establish priorities, these people are at the top of the list. People who need social services, and those who deliver social services are considered to be non-productive. In other words, it is not just the recipients of social services who are non-productive, but the social workers and the teachers and the nurses, and the people who work in the delivery of human services, are also considered to be non-productive. So in terms of establishing priorities, people who need homes and shelter are at the very bottom of the pile.

Governments are involved in a balancing act as far as people who need services are concerned. What they have to figure out is what is the absolute minimum standard that we can set for support, that will keep these people from starving to death or becoming so angry with us that they will take to the streets, and so they assess this level, and at the point at which homelessness comes to the stage where there seems to be agitation,

and there is a potential for revolution, the priority changes. Suddenly there is a focus and the study starts again to find out how little do we have to raise the level to quiet them down?

That is really why there has never been any genuine attempt to do anything about eradicating poverty. No politician wants to wipe out poverty in this country, not really. No politician really wants to address the question of homelessness.

The second point that I want to raise is a comment which you often hear repeated, that a man's home is his castle. They still believe that the family consists of a hard-working, smart, sharp entrepreneurial male, who has a home, that he for the most part built with his own hands. He certainly put it together, protects it from all attack, and he has a little picket fence around it. He also has a nice, clean, worshiping, obedient wife, who is to produce either one-and-a-half or two-and-a-half children, depending upon his financial situation. And whatever goes on inside that home is his private business and no government, and certainly not the state, has any responsibility for him. There is no understanding that most of the homes, most of the castles, no longer have men in them. When this is brought to the attention of politicians, they really believe that most of the single-parent families are that way by choice. We live in a democracy and we can choose to be a single-parent family - more and more women, because of all the women's liberation nonsense, are choosing to be be single parents, are choosing to live in poverty, and are choosing homelessness as a viable option.

What the womens liberation movement did was to focus on what goes on inside a home, and to say to government that it may be a castle, but it has proven to be a very dangerous castle for those of us who live inside it. So you have to intervene, when there is family violence, when there is child abuse, sexual abuse, incest and those kinds of things. In other words, what goes on inside the castle had to be put on the political agenda for public discourse and public decisions and legislation. So the castle started to crumble. We who are concerned about homelessness have to put on the public agenda, on the political agenda, the whole question of shelter as a right. This is a democracy, and we do have a choice, and we can say we have chosen that shelter should be a right. Health care did not come because of conferences. There were battles over universal health care in this country. The same thing with education. The same thing with most human services. So in terms of dealing with solutions, I want to talk about the battle that we are going to have to have over the question of homelessness in order to get it on the political agenda.

There is a theorist in the U.S. by the name of Bonaparte who has told us that government responds to three variables: the social climate, the economic climate and the political climate. I do not think there is any question about that. So our focus has to be on the community. I think we spend far too much time trying to educate politicians. I believe in education, I think it is a lifelong endeavor, but I do not believe in wasting it and I think that the energy we put into educating politicians is wasted energy. We would be much further ahead educating the community at large, raising the consciousness of the community at large, because that is where the real power lies. The community has to be the one to make the

decision. The community has to say to itself: 'this is an indictment of us as a civilisation, that we have people in our midst who have no shelter'. The community has to be the one to say: 'there should be a place of refuge for women who are seeking respite from battering husbands. There should be a place of refuge for refugees who come to this country and need somewhere to live before they are able to take care of themselves. There should be homes for those single-headed families by choice, design, accident or whatever. There should be a place for the juveniles in our community who are troubled and need special facilities to see them through their troubled times.' The community has to make that decision. And once the community has made that decision, then the politicians either go along with that decision or the politicians go. Direct your consciousness raising to the community. Power actually rests in the hands of the people. We have it but we do not use it. There is something perverse about us, but we keep electing governments that we fight with. We need to understand the link between political decision-making and what happens in our lives. When Stephen Lewis spoke about political will, he was absolutely on target. The political will in this country is that housing is not a priority. It is the responsibility of the individual. You should take care of your own shelter. That is your responsibility: you build it; you buy it; you maintain it; you protect it; it is yours. The state has no responsibility to you. The state intervenes only when you have failed. And an indication of your failure is that the state has to intervene on your behalf. In terms of solutions the first thing that we have to change is that attitude. We have to change the attitude that housing is the individual's responsibility, in the same way that we changed the attitude that health was the individual's responsibility, and education also.

My hope is that it will not take us a hundred years to do that. I am hoping that we will be able to build on the experiences we gained through making education and health care a public responsibility. A comprehensive attack has to be the responsibility of the community at large and government as elected by us, and that is not going to happen until our own consciousness is raised, the community's consciousness is raised, and we recognise that, in this country at least, there is no need for anyone to go without shelter because we have the wherewithal to do that. In this country at least we can demand that shelter be a universal right.

REFUGEES

Theme: Refugees are homeless in the broadest sense, since they are displaced from their countries and are deprived of their traditional culture. There is a need to acknowledge the geopolitical forces that remove people from their homes and turn them into international refugees.

Highlights

*Canada has resettled over 400,000 refugees since World War II. During 1979 alone 27,740 refugees were admitted. The last ten years have seen great changes in resettlement in Canada, especially since the Immigration Act of 1976.

*As a result of the Indochinese influx begun in 1975, and the events of 1979, 1980 and 1981 in Somalia, Kampuchea and Central America, and most recently in 1987 in Sri Lanka and the Punjab, there has been a change in the perception of the refugee problem worldwide, from one that is temporary to that of a permanent problem.

*Re-settlement is not only a physical experience, it is a significant and trying emotional experience.

*Family is an important feature of home, but many refugees are resettled as individuals or nuclear families, not extended families.

*In B.C., since a very high proportion of the population own their own homes, refugees are competing for affordable housing at the low end of the market and are therefore in competition with the working poor and host poor. Finding accommodation is a very difficult task for organizations such as MOSAIC.

*Refugee claimants with physical or mental handicaps, or suffering from disease are presently being refused.

*MOSAIC, in association with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees attempts to negotiate with different levels of government to establish basic rights and guarantees for refugees with respect to employment, shelter, health and educational opportunities.

Recommendations

*There must be a local response, a provincial policy which includes programme development and services which meet the needs of newly created refugees. Such a policy must include the broadest response to settlement for assisting new Canadians in their quest for a new "home".

*Refugee policy should consider "family re-unification" as a goal in the settlement of refugees. This includes the notion that settlement of an extended family and re-unification of refugee families is a universal right.

*Transition houses should be accessible on personal request rather than only on referral. This is particularly important for immigrant and refugee groups.

*More effective and responsive ways of assisting refugees to integrate at all levels with host communities depends to a large extent on political will and commitment to augment the efforts of private and voluntary organizations. The important requirement is not charity, but rather effective rights through which refugees can assume their responsibilities.

*A more systematic and comprehensive approach to training and education of immigration officers is required.

Refugee and Designated Classes

REFUGEE ADMISSIONS FROM ABROAD: PROVINCE OF DESTINATION*
Calendar Years 1980 - 1985

Provinces	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	TOTAL
British Columbia	5,095	1,682	1,658	1,592	1,807	1,816	13,650
Alberta	5,494	2,709	2,947	2,416	2,413	2,329	18,308
Saskatchewan	2,115	645	609	551	745	689	5,354
Manitoba	2,808	822	999	775	1,032	1,108	7,544
Ontario	15,206	5,359	6,487	5,798	6,453	7,729	47,032
Quebec	7,962	3,086	2,808	1,742	1,681	1,247	18,526
New Brunswick	414	75	42	47	72	154	804
Nova Scotia	655	114	152	75	171	194	1,361
P.E.I.	40	11	28	11	20	33	143
Newfoundland	145	20	33	8	40	53	299
Yukon/N.W.T.	55	9	9	2	6	2	83
TOTAL	39,989	14,532	16,211**	13,017	14,440	15,354	113,543

* Prior to 1982, figures show landings rather than admissions in that they exclude persons arriving in Canada after selection abroad who do not receive the grant of permanent residence on arrival.

** Includes 439 admissions by Minister's Permit from El Salvador for which no province of destination is recorded.

Source: Refugee Perspectives C.E.I.C. 1986.

NATIVE INDIANS

Theme: Homelessness among Natives arises out of the combination of a series of inter-related issues, among which housing is an important but not exclusive component. Poverty, racism, inadequate assistance and the lack of status are other pre-conditions.

High-lights

*Homeless - talking of poverty - 30-40,000 Native people in Vancouver.

*Native people come to urban areas for employment, housing, education, which are not available when they reach there.

*Jobs are usually low paying.

*Coupled with poverty is discrimination.

*Overcrowding necessary for Native families to survive. The result is substandard housing which affects health, family life, pride, and other social and personal implications.

*Department of Indian Affairs survey (1980) showed that 50-70% of Natives were on welfare; life expectancy lower than non-Native population; infant mortality was four times higher than national, as was that of ages 20-44; for ages 44-64 mortality was twice national average; violent deaths, particularly suicide were six times national average. All were related to inadequate housing.

*Only 20-25% complete secondary school.

*Native Friendship Centre finding it difficult to be a bridge.

*Most of the Native population is stable (not transient).

*Native people will not use services unless provided by Native people.

<u>On Reserve Situation</u>

*Many of the Reserves since the 1930s have inadequate plumbing no water.

*DIA is now talking about transferring delivery of services and programme to Bands and tribal councils.

*Outrageous amount of funds spent to run the bureaucracy compared to the little which goes to the Bands.

*Tribal Council treated as we treat people on welfare.

*Penner Report which suggested DIA should devolve, is not hopeful that this will happen.

*Self-government is wanted. What Sechelt has is not self-government - there are too many restrictions.

*Assimilation has not worked.

Off Reserve - Urban

*Many problems encountered coming into urban setting-culture shock, lack of education, unemployability (lack of support group), lack of awareness of where to go for support groups, feel intimidated.

*Native agency should be first contact.

*Need for more services to be offered through Native organizations.

*Native organizations must be given resources to make services available (for example: Nishga and others have local tribal council in urban areas such as Vancouver, which makes relocation easier).

*Native people are still trying to persuade M.S.H.M. that decisions such as placing of children should be made by Native organizations.

*First Nations are facing the fight against assimilation as well as poverty.

Recommendations

*Recognize land claims.

*Native issues must become a priority among all three levels of government.

*External factors have historically had more control over Native issues, but Native people should control their own future.

*Native people should have control over child welfare.

*Revenue for Native housing is inadequate and should be increased in addition to more funding for Native organizations.

*Zoning by-laws should be reviewed so that illegal suites, which exist because of lack of affordable and adequate housing, should be brought up to health, electrical and safety standards.

*Incentive programmes should be open-ended.

*Welfare rates must be raised and combined into one sum, at least to the official poverty level to avoid the indignity of food banks and impoverished living conditions.

A tri-level government commitment to reduce poverty and allow for Native self-determination is required.

*Native organizations must be given the resources to ensure that services are available by Natives for Natives, and to maintain their cultural identity.

YOUTH

Theme: Decisions made affecting the lives of homeless youth which are based on chronological categorization mask the variety and wide diversity of people and circumstances among what appears to be a growing segment of the homeless. A great deal of ambiguity, conjecture, and mis-informed opinion surround the situations facing homeless youth.

Highlights

*Adults invariably apply the labels, set the rules and develop the policies and programmes which do not accurately reflect the variety and individuality among the youth, and the transitional changes which they experience.

*Chronological definitions are insufficient as they do not take attitudinal, lifestyle and emotional considerations into account in assisting youth to take control over their lives.

*While there are great pressures imposed on youth to achieve, their options are often extremely limited.

*Concern was expressed over the gaps in the provision of services, and the lack of appropriate services required to keep troubled youth off the streets.

*The youth who led the workshop strongly advocated a legitimate participatory role for youth in determining strategies to assist young people, rather than having a pre-determined system imposed on them. The recognition that this involves better communication among all concerned groups, and more effective involvement by youth was raised in connection with the view expressed that communities have given over the caring component to the state or the 'system'. The 'system' is not working for troubled youth.

*In Victoria, youth were polled as to what areas they would like to see promoted for job training. The highest priority was in the food-services category, which resulted in the establishment of a Youth Food Services programme and a job entry programme (Cooks Down Under) which have had considerable success.

*A Richmond scheme to develop 'accessible alternatives' in terms of living arrangements which would enable youth to have a stable and secure basis from which to work towards independence was raised as an example where lack of funding can be a barrier to developing flexible alternatives. This discussion was extended to highlight the inherent problems of re-zoning and public resistance to housing projects aimed at

assisting troubled youth.

*The issue of emergency shelters and group home settings for youth highlighted a number of homelessness related issues. These living arrangements were frequently cited in discussions centred around 'what is not a home?' Examples were given of situations in which abused youth were taken from crisis situations and placed in settings with sexual offenders, and where accessibility to emergency and transitional accommodation was conditional on being made a ward of the courts, thereby precluding certain groups. It was also stated that many street youth are not suited to group home placements, but alternatives are lacking.

*Sexual and physical abuse are common experiences among homeless youth, but in addition to support to assist them, there was strong support given to the view that society must take a much stronger and more effective stand on the root causes of this problem rather than addressing the end-result. Given that many youth who live on the streets have experienced abusive home situations, the feeling of family and belonging among peers was recognized as an important source of support, although it was also obvious that this can very quickly evaporate when conditions on the street are bad.

These points were reinforced by the observations of a suicide prevention worker who described the hopelessness and alienation among many of the over- and under-achievers with whom they have contact.

*Discussion of what constitutes a home centred around issues of safety, security, a sense of belonging, flexibility, meaningful involvement and participation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

*More services for youth who are older than 19 years and no longer considered as juveniles within the system. While they may have been in independent living arrangements, many do not have the necessary skills to live independently. The break is often extremely hard, and under existing policies and programmes, there is no overlapping of services or support. A wide gap exists between group homes and independent living, with few services to help bridge the gap.

*There must be more and accessible alternatives for street youth which take into consideration the varied lifestyles of youth. The majority of government programmes are

standardised and rigid, and group homes are often not accessible to street youth. For those used to living on their own and being responsible for their actions, more flexible alternatives to group homes are needed.

*Provision should be made to recognize youth as being eligible for non-profit and social housing, and as a corollary, B.C. Housing Management should consider youth as a priority category for eligibility in their housing programmes.

*Solutions to the problems facing youth should include proactive initiatives in addition to the usual reactive strategies. Thus, preventive intervention is required through educational, counselling, training and life-skills means, as well as more homes to meet the needs of youth with problems.

*More and better emergency shelters are needed, particularly shelters and transitional accommodation which do not restrict entry to wards of the court, but these should complement, not replace, permanent and secure homes for youth. More variety and alternative, flexible living arrangements for youth are possible and desirable than currently exist.

*Non-governmental sources of funding to assist youth are required to remove the current monopolistic and overly bureaucratic forms of government assistance.

*More emphasis is required on developing effective life-skills and outreach programmes which help youth cope with stresses related to long term unemployment, abuse, and independent living. These programmes can be particularly effective in long term residential settings, but should extend to emergency and transitional shelter.

*There is an urgent need for more street workers particularly in the downtown cores. In addition to the need for more and flexible services at the community level, it is apparent that existing services need to be more co-ordinated and interlinked, and that more funding for preventive measures is required.

*Youth should be entitled to equal access to the range of services currently available to adults.

*Job training, life skills and affordable secure housing should be combined in projects targetted for youth. They should also be available in rural areas as there are indications that many street youth in urban core areas originate from rural communities.

WOMEN

Theme: Homelessness for women must be viewed within the various stages of a woman's life. Understanding what it means to be homeless and a woman involves knowing what is and what is not a home, who is homeless or at risk, what happens to homeless women, and what are the effects of homelessness on women?

Highlights

*Five stages in women's lives were differentiated. Each have separate although inter-related concerns with respect to homelessness. The stages identified include: prenatal to ten years; teenage; motherhood to family break-up; middle-age; old age.

*Women most susceptible to homelessness include: the mentally handicapped, teens, older single women, battered women, childless women, ex-mental patients, urban core women, chemically dependent and discouraged women.

*For these women, homelessness often involves: a transient lifestyle, isolation, denial of choices, being constantly uprooted, living with violence, no security of tenure, lack of community, illegal suites, loss of a partner, being deprived of essential growing experiences and future planning.

*The psychological effects of homelessness can engender: fear of relationships, lack of trust, self esteem and personal identity; hopelessness, futility, and shame can result in parenting difficulties causing stress for children.

*The impact of homelessness also has practical ramifications in terms of what happens to homeless women: children are apprehended, there is violence and terror, teen pregnancies, rape, premature death, crime, prostitution, and the persistence of a cycle of poverty from one generation to the next.

*A broad range of shelter and housing conditions were identified which do <u>not</u> constitute a home: hotel rooms, foster homes, transition houses, living with violence, lack of privacy, lack of emotional security; living in poverty, in unsafe or inappropriate accommodation (crowding, unsanitary and poorly maintained buildings), illegal suites, and where there are physical and/or illogical regulatory restrictions.

Recommendations

*Training for facilitative management and support people.

*Homesharing as a temporary solution to a crisis situation.

*Funding for more housing co-operatives and other non-profit housing.

*Legalizing illegal suites.

*Rent controls.

*Unconditional social housing for women on the streets.

*More transition houses.

*Encouragement for co-operatives to eventually become self-sufficient (that is, not dependent on governments).

*A broader definition of needy.

*Extension of the standard of maintenance acts to cover all lower-mainland areas.

*Unconditional housing for battered women (for example, single women without children often have a problem getting into second-stage housing).

*More dollars spent on social housing (social housing must be made a priority, rather than priorizing the different but urgent needs of all homeless people).

*Respect for peer needs and age groups.

RESOLUTION

The re-allocation of funds to dramatically increase social and non-profit housing for women of all ages, groups and circumstances will benefit the provincial economy. There must be a re-examination and re-evaluation of the allocation of funds to such projects as North East Coal, EXPO, B.C.Place Stadium, the sky-train, etc, in terms of their economic and social benefit. Development of any new program must be in consultation with the women who will benefit.

FARM WORKERS

Theme: Homelessness for farmworkers means impermanent accommodation in substandard conditions (for example, cabins without sanitation).

Highlights

*The farmworkers are currently being organized by the Canadian Farmworkers Union. One of the concerns of the Union is the substandard housing of transient farmworkers.

*Most of the transient farmworkers in BC are Indo-Canadians or French Canadians. They are contracted primarily by English Canadians.

*The contractors sometimes provide temporary accommodation for the period of time during which the workers are required (In some cases, this accommodation is in buildings constructed as barns). Otherwise the farmworkers are on their own.

*An estimated 500 farmworkers in the Fraser Valley are housed permanently in cabins with limited access to utilities and primitive sanitation. Crowded conditions (for example 4 to 6 people per stall) are not uncommon.

*Because of the impermanent nature of residency of farmworkers, they face difficulty in obtaining social assistance when they are in need.

*Health and safety inspections of working conditions and residential conditions are inadequate.

*The base rate for farmworkers is usually about $2 per hour, plus piece work. Rent for accommodation is normally deducted from wages.

*Very few farmworkers (perhaps no more than 5 - 10 %) speak English. This makes it easier to discriminate against them.

*There is no housing for elderly members of farmworkers' families.

*The current labour conditions of farmworkers are akin to the system of bonded labour in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Recommendations

*Health and safety standards should be properly and regularly enforced.

*Minimum housing standards should apply to all accommodation for farmworkers.

*There should be a system of day care for children on or near work sites.

*The BC Housing Commission should study the housing conditions of farmworkers, propose solutions and provide subsidies to assure adequate housing for farmworkers.

*The province should also assure that farmworkers have a range of housing options from trailers to permanent accommodation.

PHYSICALLY DISABLED

Theme: Homelessness for the physically disabled is as much a design and environmental issue as it is a social and economic concern.

Highlights

*The physically disabled include the hearing and visually impaired as well as the orthopoedically disabled.

*For many of the physically disabled, design barriers prevent accessibility. The design barriers are not only the immediate physical environs of the house but also the surrounding area. Because the costs of upgrading or changing facilities are shared among various levels of government as well as private institutions and individuals, progress is slow.

*Many of the physically disabled do not wish to be segregated. The Independent Living Movement provides one way of assuring integration.

*The 'private market' responds to the need of some of the physically disabled, particularly to those who have adequate incomes, but the response is slow for low income individuals. Since many physically disabled depend upon compensation, pensions, or social assistance, they necessarily turn to government for leadership.

*Along with design and income problems, there also is a lack of long term educational training programs or ongoing community support services. Without these programs, independent community living is difficult to achieve.

*It is also important to recognize, in this era of deinstitutionalization, that some of the disabled, because of their condition, may prefer institutional support to independent living. It needs to be available for those who choose it.

*The rising expectation of the disabled necessarily leads to a growing gap between perceived need and services. However, the disabled demand basic 'rights' which, in turn, changes their perception of need.

*The fragmented nature of the disabled community makes organization difficult.

Recommendations

*Non-market housing should be located in safe areas accessible to community services and amenities.

*Housing for the disabled must ensure 100% accessibility throughout a project and provide easy maintenance at low cost.

*A well advertised Housing Registry should be established in the community in order to ensure the efficient and effective matching of those in need with available housing. The Registry should also be used as a planning device for targeting and budgeting.

*The federal and provincial governments should be encouraged to abandon the 'competitive-proposal-call system' in favour of selection based on targeting special needs.

*The provincial government should justify why persons must be housed institutionally on a long term basis.

*The provincial pensions for the handicapped should be increased to reflect real living costs in the community. They also should be indexed.

*The disabled should be assured security of tenure in appropriately accessible accommodation.

MENTALLY DISABLED

Theme: *Homelessness for the mentally disabled refers to an inability to find quality accommodation of choice. Frequently, the mentally disabled are forced into institutions or group homes which are not voluntarily chosen.*

High-lights

*Homelessness is not the absence of physical accommodation, it is a lack of quality living.

*Basically what the mentally handicapped are struggling to achieve is the right to have accommodation where there is freedom of movement and association among friends or relatives.

*Currently many group homes, which are being marketed as alternatives to large scale insititutions, do not offer choice but simply restrict people in a less visible way. There are growing efforts to counter this trend as the B.C. government closes Woodlands and Glendale within the next five years.

*One desirable solution to the problem of homelessness for the mentally disabled is expressed through independent living centres. The centres are consumer controlled, community based, non-profit, cross-disability organizations promoting integration in the community.

*Currently, in B.C., much of the initiative for deinstitutionalization comes from the provincial government. More direction has to come from community leaders, parents, and the mentally disabled themselves.

*The mentally disabled also need to have more influence over the design and development of accommodation which is specifically directed to them.

Recommendations

*Advocacy associations should make the public more aware of the housing needs of the disabled.

*Integrated housing should be accompanied by meaningful employment and adequate income.

*The disabled need to be empowered to do as much as possible for themselves.

*The Ministry of Health should guarantee adequate consultation with the disabled, prior to developing housing and personal support services.

*There needs to be ongoing public monitoring of homes for the disabled in order to assure high standards.

*The provincial government should promote housing which focuses on personal needs, assures individual support, and allocates specific funds to individuals.

SENIORS

Theme: The focus of the workshop, as with Youth, was not so much on the factors which contribute to homelessness, as it was on identifying who among seniors were more susceptible to becoming homeless, and the types of assistance which they required. Once again, a chronologically-based definition was considered to be of limited use in identifying the critical issues. Clear links were made between health, economic, public policy and locational factors which have a direct bearing on the range and quality of available and desirable living conditions for seniors.

High-lights

*Using 1971 census data, it was estimated that there were over 300,000 people aged 65 and over in British Columbia (11%), of which some 60,000 were over 80 years. These tend to be the most frail and in greater need of health care and social services.

*The 'young-old' and 'old-old' have different needs, expectations and aspirations, which has a bearing on their living conditions and service requirements.

*Important differences in the sex ratios (between 65-79, 85 men for every 100 women; 80+, 58 men per 100 women) and marital status (50% of women between 65-69 are widowed, rising to 60% for 75-79, and 77% aged 80+, whereas 75% of men are married) have an important bearing on living arrangements which are required for seniors.

*B.C. has an above average concentration of seniors living in urban centres (85% for 65-79 ages and 90% for those 80 and above), with 50% of the Province's seniors residing in the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

*Whereas 80% of B.C. seniors live in private households and the majority own their homes, seniors in rented accommodation, particularly those on fixed incomes, are a cause for concern.

*The three groups considered to be priority concerns were unattached people (mostly female), low income seniors (particularly renters), and those 80 years and older for whom health concerns were paramount.

*Seniors considered most likely to be homeless or significantly at risk of becoming homeless include: those living in downtown eastside neighbourhoods; people in acute care units (particularly if they have lost their homes prior to leaving hospital); seniors in institutional or custodial settings who do not regard these as 'home'; and those living in unwanted family

arrangements. Consideration was also extended to those who have aged prematurely (eg: Altzheimer and alcohol/drug dependent sufferers).

*The lack of widely available, readily and easily accessible, inter-connected services and facilities for seniors was widely recognized, and concern was expressed over the recent closures of information and referral services across the province.

*A most important conclusion that not all seniors can make their own choices without assistance, underscored the need for more comprehensive and easily accessed assistance and a commitment to support seniors in their efforts to remain active participants in mainstream society.

Recommendations

*Since homelessness for many seniors is at root an issue of poverty, legislation is required to increase social assistance levels to ensure an adequate standard of living.

*Legislation is needed to ensure that private pension funds provide survivor benefits and adequate pension benefits.

*Seniors must be able to remain in their own homes wherever possible, and if they have to have institutional care, it should be in the community of their choice.

*Solutions to the problems facing seniors must be at the local scale, and linked to community services and networks.

*The office of the Rentalsman should be reinstated and a more equitable Landlord/Tenant Act legislated.

*There is a need for adequate, affordable and appropriate housing alternatives for seniors, particularly low and fixed income renters.

*A strengthening of the seniors network is required, which involves more seniors helping other seniors, and funding to (re)-establish and co-ordinate information and referral services.

*It should be possible to cash RRSPs at 60 years and more portability between different pension plans.

*People who take early retirement should not be financially penalized for taking other part-time employment.

*Home support services should be made more accessible and remunerative.

*Long Term Care facilities should be made more accessible to communities and should be expanded to include outreach services for non-institutionalized seniors.

*Policies and zoning regulations should be reviewed to address the changing needs which seniors experience, eg: renovations to meet health requirements, services to the homebound, families willing to take in seniors, homesharers, etc. A better and more sympathetic understanding of the changes which seniors encounter would facilitate more flexible and comprehensive alternative arrangements for homeless and seniors at risk.

MENTALLY ILL

Theme: Homelessness for the mentally ill is not just a shortage of housing and income but is intricately related to the nature of the illness. Hence, health and housing issues are closely related.

High-lights

*The nature of mental illness is such that sometimes people have a distorted perception of reality, or impaired judgement regarding themselves and their environment, and an inability to follow a treatment program. For these reasons, the BC Mental Health Act currently allows for enforced commital provided there are signatures from two qualified medical personnel. Proposed legislative changes, stressing the legal rights of patients, may in fact hinder treatment programs.

*The close relationship between medical services and community support sources for the mentally ill in cities like Vancouver and Victoria helps to ensure that mental health legislation is part of the solution, not the problem.

*Programs such as Cool-Aid in Victoria reach out to individuals on the streets who are chronically homeless. Many of them are found to be mentally disabled, particularly with schizophrenic disorders. While these individuals may distrust community services, 'outreach' workers can overcome some of the traditional suspicion.

*In spite of the difficult behaviour of some of the mentally ill, integration within the community remains an important goal.

*Whenever possible, self-help groups are being organized so that housing and support services are sensitive to the needs of the mentally ill.

*Transitional as well as long term housing needs of the mentally ill, while not sufficiently addressed, are being developed by community groups in close co-operation with the BC Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Services and Housing.

Recommendations

*A broad range of housing and support services should be developed to meet the varied needs of mentally ill individuals at different life stages.

*There is an ongoing need for co-operative partnerships among various governmental, non-profit, and private sectors.

*Close attention should be given to the potential impact of impending changes in mental health legislation on access to treatment, social services and housing.

*Adequate funding of mental health programs must be maintained.

*Active information exchange should be provided in the community to assure the matching of supply and demand for services and housing.

*An association of non-profit housing societies should be formed to provide support services and advocacy for members.

*Social Assistance to handicapped persons should be increased to reflect more adequately the cost of living. In social assistance, the designation of a shelter component should be eliminated.

SINGLE ROOM OCCUPANTS

Theme: Homelessness for Single Room Occupants is directly linked to housing conditions, affordability, availability of supply and to the lack of basic rights and guarantees which restrict effective choice and control. The absence of adequate, safe, affordable and secure housing significantly increases the risk of homelessness for these groups.

Highlights

*Participants engaged in a workshop which assessed the characteristics, opportunities and constraints of the downtown eastside neighbourhoods in Vancouver in which the vast majority of single room occupants can legitimately be considered homeless in the broad sense of the term (that is, without a home).

*An overview of the objectives, mandates and community involvement by the Downtown Eastside Residents Association was presented to illustrate the range of problems and conditions which are being tackled and which still remain to be resolved.

*Average rents in the community are $230 per month, in comparison to the shelter portion of social assistance which is set at $209. As a result, often more than 55% of available income is being spent on accommodation, despite the recommendation by government that 30% is an acceptable proportion.

*Hotel accommodation was regarded as "shelter without a home" since there is no security of tenure and issues of affordability and quality are perennial problems.

*Evictions, displacement and a steady decline in the available stock of rooms have serious implications for residents in this area of the city.

*83% of the licensed pubs in Vancouver are concentrated in the downtown eastside. The area has traditionally been the playground for lower mainland residents who often act irresponsibly in this area.

*There is an acute shortage of park and recreational facilities in the area.

*The area is beginning to experience an increase in the supply of well-designed, successfully managed and operated social housing projects which have been designed to enhance community involvement and a sense of belonging. While more is needed, these projects are a good example of how to harness the potential in the area. A particularly successful initiative involves

the active participation of the residents in all aspects of the operation and control over the projects.

*Examples of the relative success of projects in the area were illustrated by personal histories of a number of former single room occupants whose lives have been fundamentally improved as a result of becoming actively involved in social housing in the area.

Recommendations

*There is an urgent requirement for more social and co-operative housing and more accessible community services.

*Upgrading of the delapidated housing stock in the urban core is needed to ensure an adequate supply of safe, affordable and secure housing. To ensure the maintenance of the housing stock at the low end of the market, by-laws need to be implemented and enforced to prevent the destruction of rental accommodation which is not being replaced.

*To address the problems of displacement, evictions and forced relocation, housing must become a right as opposed to a commodity or privilege. This requires both political will and an active commitment by governments at all three levels.

*A review of the system for providing tax incentives to upgrade run-down hotels should be undertaken, and a thorough analysis conducted of the reasons for the decline in the stock of single room occupancy hotels.

*Tenant rights must be legislated and enforced.

*A concerted effort to maximise the use of the RRAP programme is required, and should be based on a 5-year rent control programme.

*Tenants should have active participation in the management of their buildings.

*Housing design and management should be closely integrated with local services and programmes to ensure that a sense of community and meaningful involvement are promoted.

*Federal and provincial governments should increase the supply of subsidized housing and develop more comprehensive rent supplement programmes.

*To ensure that tenants have choice and control over their living environment, a broader supply and more flexible range of housing alternatives are required which provide safe, affordable and quality accommodation in areas where people want to live.

*Security of tenure should be guaranteed for tenants, and income levels should be adequate to enable tenants to exercise choice in the housing market.

*More active community involvement is a necessary prerequisite to effective lobbying for improved housing conditions.

*Government must continue to control subsidized social housing to ensure affordability, and accessibility by the poor.

TRANSIENTS

Theme: Transients include drifters, dreamers, youth, the mentally ill, substance abusers, system abusers, natives and other ethnic minorities, broken families, prostitutes, the new poor, runaways and throwaways. Transiency and homelessness are related to structured constraints which prevent people from exercising personal choice and control, living to their potential.

Highlights

*As the majority of the participants were front-line workers, descriptions of who transients tend to be were reflected in the various clientele assisted by organizations such as Lookout, Triage, Crosswalk, etc. and the physical, mental and economic problems which dominate their lives.

*The range of ages and variety of problems emerged as significant issues in attempts to categorize the transient population, and the reasons behind their transience.

*While it was recognized that there is considerable "institutional help" for transients, there is an apparent lack of effective administrative channeling of this support which frustrates individuals.

*Vancouver is perceived as a terminal city with a mild climate which attracts individuals from other regions.

*Moving into the emergency services system generally signifies a movement into a cyclical poverty in which people become alienated, and to which society does not listen.

*The emergency services system forces individuals into a reliance upon social workers and the system.

*Transients from other jurisdictions are often perceived as being a problem for that jurisdiction.

*Transients are both running to and running from: different welfare rates induce migration, as do the effects of unemployment due to technological change and obsolescence; but transients are often looking for work and have high ideals and expectations for a better life.

*The deinstitutionalised have substantial needs which are not being met.

*Concern was expressed about priorities established by provincial ministries which misunderstand the plight of the victim, for example where a child is seen to be the

problem or in need of care when the family situation is the basis of the problem, or when a woman prostituting is cause for action but a woman in poverty is not.

*The importance of the links between income and meaningful employment are too often ignored, and although transients may be capable and actively seeking work, the cyclical poverty results in a trap.

*Regulations governing access to benefits, training and employment are inhibiting.

*It is only at the local level that access to services will be successful, but adequate services require the political commitment of provincial and federal authorities, and the will to address the problems faced by transients.

Recommendations

*Change the Canada Assistance Plan (get compliance on the return to home province policy).

*Adequate national welfare rates.

*Meaningful jobs.

*Adequate mental health services/community services.

*Establish community information centres.

*Build a caring community.

*Settle land claims.

*Allow single-room occupancy under Residential Tenancy Act.

*Open Area Planning Offices.

*Advocate an association of non-profit societies.

*Enforce maintenance standards in single-room occupancies.

*End distinction between shelter and support allowance.

*Rent controls needed.

*Discourage privatising of social services

(encourages competition for the limited social service dollar, therefore, undercutting occurs).

*Produce more co-operative housing.

*Recognize that solutions must ensure and maintain the fundamental rights and dignity of the individual.

*Recognize the need for political solutions.

*Policies should not treat individuals as commodities.

*Develop policies (objectives) which are premised with concerns for full employment in a sustainable community.

*Pool common resources.

*Given that different services have different mandates, it is important to co-ordinate both services and mandates.

*Increase inter-agency co-operation.

*Develop and circulate information.

*Recognize the need for a more unified front.

*Formulate objectives required from all levels of government.

*Different interests should be drawn together to establish this unified front of objectives, for example, Urban Core Committee of Community Workers, Anti-poverty groups, ELP, SPARC, Housing Coalitions, should join forces to address poverty and homelessness.

PANEL REPORTS

The three panelists from the opening session were asked to monitor four workshops throughout the day and in consultation with the workshop facilitators and rapporteurs, provide a brief overview of the main themes to the delegates prior to a plenary session. While recognizing that there is considerable overlap in these remarks now that the workshop highlights have been pulled together, it was nevertheless decided to reproduce the panel summaries partly to illustrate the socially constructed reality which emerged on the day, and partly in recognition of the monumental task undertaken by the panelists in distilling over five hours of deliberation in each workshop into a five minute overview! Dr. Glenn Drover replaced Rosemary Brown at this session.

HULCHANSKI: I monitored four workshops which fortunately had some things in common - refugees, natives, single-room occupants, and transients. I have divided my summaries into: PROBLEMS and RECOMMENDATIONS

The Problems

*Security of tenure

*Lack of family accommodation

*Regional disparities in welfare rates

*Lack of qualified staff

*Lack of control over living environment

*Attitude of blaming the victim and racial discrimination

*Falling between the cracks - three levels of government, different programmes etc.

*Native services not being provided by Natives - and no say in services being provided to them

*Living conditions on reserves are very bad

*In urban areas - severe continuing loss of affordable housing stock

*Social needs not being addressed by leaving social housing to private sector - especially transients and single-room occupants

*Lack of settlement policy and programmes for refugees

*For Natives - need for affirmative action

*Overcrowding of Natives and refugees

*Regulations - unjust and arbitrary

*Lack of inter-agency co-ordination

*Lack of awareness of where to go - transients, refugees, etc.

*Shelter component of GAIN being separate causes problems

*Land claims are leaving Native communities up in the air

*DIA treament of Tribal Councils is poor

Recommendations

1. GAIN: - must be raised to at least the poverty line. There should be no shelter component/income component disinction. Earnings exemption should be increased. Incentive programmes should be open-ended. There should be more of a national programme (there are great regional differences bearing no relation to cost of living). People should have the right to privacy.

2. Security of tenure: - many officials do not realise the implications of being a tenant, particularly in single-room occupancy hotels.

3. Native issues: - these should be made a priority of Federal/Provincial and Municipal governments.

4. Affirmative action programmes should be instituted for Natives- we should include Native people in all decision-making affecting Natives.

5. Land claims have to be settled.

6. Adequate funding of service agencies and housing societies, etc, which help Native people is urgently required.

7. Participation in decision-making at all levels - many of the recipients do not have any say in what happens.

8. All types of programmes for social housing need to be expanded.

9. Rent controls are needed.

10. Proper housing maintenance: - especially in 'illegal' suites in Vancouver.

11. Need to build communities - not just housing projects, which combine social policy and housing policy much better.

12. Improved provision of social services: - more human approach, more qualified people with proper training, proper staffing levels, etc.

13. Increased meaningful job opportunities.

FALLICK: I dealt with four very interesting workshops: youth, women, seniors, and farm workers.

In the morning the focus was on: Who are the homeless?

In terms of who are the homeless, Stephen Lewis' distinction between the absolute homeless and the 'at risk' homeless, seemed to be very appropriate for these workshops. In the workshops on youth and farm workers, a lot of the discussion took place around 'absolute homelessness', whereas with the seniors and women, the 'at risk' population was the main focus.

With respect to: What is homelessness? It was interesting that in all of the four workshops that question was addressed in two ways: the question was asked - What is home?, but the other question was asked - What is not home?

All the workshops successfully identified the very real human dimensions associated with being a homeless person, particularly as it relates to being alone, afraid, angry, and unsure where to turn or who to turn to for help. So the image of homelessness as life in disarray was made very vivid in the discussions.

The afternoon sessions tended to focus on solutions.

YOUTH

Four main issues emerged: - the problem of defining youth - chronologial age is not sufficient because it does not take into consideration attitudes, lifestyle, choice, and these are important in the delivery of services and housing alternatives:

- it is usually adults who apply the labels, set the rules, develop the policies and programmes, and they do not reflect the variety among youth. There is great pressure to be achievers but options are often very limited;

- lack of access by youth to appropriate services, and related to this

- there are tremendous gaps in the provision of services, particuarly to help troubled youth keep off the streets. These gaps are particularly obvious when you go from group home to independent living - the support mechanisms are often not there.

The issue of: What is a Home? - security, safety, a range of alternatives, they have to have some degree of control in order to be and act independently.

What is not a home? - inappropriate mix of residents in group homes (it may be a shelter, but not a home)

Recommendations

Programmes be proactive as well as reactive - get to the problem before it becomes a major concern. Sexual and physical abuse were seen as major problems requiring proactive intervention.

More and better emergency shelters - more long-term shelters are needed; more flexibility in the system, especially to reduce the red tape. Have more non-governmental housing. The community has given up its responsibility, therefore education and awareness is needed, as well as community-based funding.

Change BC Housing Management policies to include youth in their definition of core need.

Combine long-term shelter with life-skills programmes.

More out-reach type programmes are needed because they do work.

Make downtown areas more hospitable for youth.

FARM WORKERS

Particuarly significant was a discussion concerning the conditions in which farm workers have to live - barns, stables, etc. But what was heartening was the ability of these people to generate a community even within these dreadful conditions.

Housing is needed, but it must retain the community base.

Income - society must put a higher value on food production in order to adequately recompense farm workers.

Health and safety by-laws must be enforced.

Minimum standards should be legislated, and appropriate standards should be negotiated.

A housing continuum is needed - trailers are not necessarily a bad idea, but they must be part of a continuum which takes temporary and permanent housing into consideration.

The enforcement of discrimination legislation must be much stronger.

More provision of adequate day-care is needed on site.

Incidental note - many of the farm workers want to be farmers - they want to get on with the job, and they want to own their own farms.

WOMEN

Five stages in the life of women were identified:

Pre-natal
Teen
Motherhood
Period after marriage break-up
Seniors

These critical stages in the life-cycle were used to address the issues:

What is homelessness? The focus here was principally on the losses that people experience due to homelessness. Homelessness here was the absence of security, and there were legal and procedural problems that women experience when they become homeless.

What is not a home? The principal thing that emerged here was the broad range of categories that were considered not to be a home.

Who is homeless? Again a wide variation, particularly when you look at the five stages in the life-cycle. The needs are different, the circumstances are different, therefore the solutions must be different.

What happens to homeless women? The issues here focussed on the options available to women, and one very significant element was the lack of options, the limited range of options, available to women who become homeless.

What are the effects of homelessness on women? Psychological effects.

<u>Recommendations</u>

The reallocation of funds to dramatically increase social and non-profit housing for women of all age-groups and circumstances will benefit the Provincial economy. There must be a re-examination and a re-evaluation of the allocation of funds to such projects as Northeast coal, Expo, the Stadium, Skytrain, etc, in terms of their economic and social benefit. Development of any programme must be in consultation with women.

Funding a programme for management and support personnel - home sharing model has potential utility.

Increase density in city to increase affordable housing, but that issue must also address land price increase problems - no point in increasing density if land prices rise and housing is still unaffordable.

Housing for women must be unconditional (that is, no exclusion of children).

Federal and provincial governments must be encouraged to build more social housing.

Broader definition of 'needy' required.

Self-management by tenants needs to be encouraged and increased.

SENIORS

ISSUES IDENTIFIED

Closing of information and referral services - for example, Red Door Housing registry.

Important to recognise that not everyone can make a choice, they often need help and that help has to be in-place.

Call for re-establishment of the Rentalsman's office.

Seniors must be able to remain in their homes and in the community of their choice.

Winter housing for people currently using jails and other forms of institutions during the winter, needs to be put in place.

Solutions must be local - either at the neighbourhood or community level, whichever is more effective.

Seniors must be involved at all stages of decision-making

Policies are needed to deal with such things as renovation changes to meet needs of seniors

Policies to encourage homesharing and to encourage families who are willing to take seniors in.

Policies and programmes needed to provide services for the home-bound seniors.

Government agencies that supply services to seniors should be under one roof - a one-stop shopping centre where you can get all the things you need and not be moved from pillar to post.

In order for that to succeed you must have trained co-ordinators who can handle a variety of problems which an individual may have.

Policies came under three particular categories:

Income policies - need to increase social assistance.

Legislation to double the size of the OAS, guaranteed income supplement, Old Age Assistance and type of programmes that deliver money to seniors.

Programmes - rentalsman, rent controls, affordability, adequate housing, appropriate housing.

DROVER: The three workshops that I am reporting on were directed at issues related to the physically disabled, the mentally ill and mentally disabled. And in some ways those three groups obviously have a common problem, but for each of them there are specific ones too. I have tried to summarise under two broad areas, one in relation to the substantive issues that were raised and the other in terms of solutions.

On the issues side, there were three concerns: the dimensions of the problem, secondly the dilemmas, particularly in relation to housing and homelessness, and thirdly dilemmas, in relation to the support services.

Scale of the problem - if one looks at homelessness in relation to questions of affordability and accessibility and possible standards, for many of the disabled, the question of homelessness is probably a transitional problem rather than a permanent one - when they move from institutions into the community, or within the community from one type of accommodation to another. However, if one broadens the definition to include questions of privacy and a sense of security, and extend access to appropriate community services, then the dimensions of the problem begin to broaden. If one also tries to include, as the youth group did, concern about your own sense of control over your environment, and the opportunities that environment offers to you, as really being the full range of what a home is about, then many more of the disabled would be homeless, and would probably perceive themselves as being homeless.

I raise this because that three-fold distinction is probably something that cuts across the workshops and if we are to address the problem of homelessness seriously in this country, we will have to deal with that, by getting people to be clearer about what they perceive to be their homeless state, so that it is not just those of us who are in government, or not-homeless making judgements about those who are.

The second concern has to do with the dilemmas around some of the issues related to the disabled, and one that cuts through all three groups is the question of segregation or integration. There was a recognition that the disabled want to be as much as possible integrated into the community, and see therefore the issues around homelessness or community support services as being philosophically oriented toward integration. At the same time however, some kinds of segregation are both important and helpful.

Nevertheless, for the disabled as for anybody, the key is choice, and the feeling that in relation to where they live, how they live, the way they live, the choice has to be as much theirs as it is for all of us. Perhaps more than any other group in society the disabled have had to live in institutions, and have been, one way or the other, institutionalised out of necessity, forcibly, or because there was no alternative.

Regarding alternatives to develop: - shifts from institutions to the community are of course now accepted in theory, but in practice we are a long way from achieving it. But there is also a question among the workshops as to whether group homes are really not another form of small institutionalised operation. If we see that as the next phase, it misses the need to pay much more attention to the preferences of choice and individuality.

One issue did arise in relation to the amount of social housing for the disabled, - in the lower mainland it tends to be concentrated in the downtown core, and it needs to be distributed more widely in the area.

Finally, in relation to the dilemmas associated with the support services, one of the on-going problems in terms of assuring that people have a home and not just a shelter or a place to live, for the disabled, is on-going education and employment training, and not just token employment. Secondly in relation to the types of support services that are available - there is the feeling that there are those support services out there and they are very diversified and there are many of them, but they vary considerably depending upon the type of disability. In relation to community education, there seemed to be the feeling throughout the three workshops, of a strong sensitivity to the need for more community education, changing public attitudes, changing public perceptions, and the need for that to be an on-going process. To assure that when the disabled are moved, particularly from institutions into shelters, they are not forgotten, not only in terms of issues like education and training, but the on-going social supports that make life worthwhile on a day to day basis.

Some of the solutions were broadly defined around three categories:

Housing Design -- the kind of accommodation necessary: should be located in areas that were safe; amenities reasonably accessible; on-going consultation process between those constructing housing stock, and those involved with service provision; relatively solid stock so that maintenance was as easy as possible; those who are living in it should not only be part of design process, but have an important role in its on-going management - it should not be done for them, but they should do as much as possible for themselves.

Community Initiatives (particularly in relation to support services) need for education, job training; housing registry for availability of accommodation; specialised services such as Outreach; sharing of information on things already being done.

Government (co-ordination and finance) financial support; GAIN rates inadequate; shelter component should not be identified; movement away from

social assistance to have a type of guaranteed income - guaranteed independent living; responsibility to promote idea that handicapped have rights; government has obligation to consult these groups, and that the reverse is not always true; social housing quota should be increased; abandonment of competitive non-market projects to encourage projects on their merit and quality rather than production at lowest cost; sensitivity to other legislative changes (for example Mental Health Act) these Acts are not changed in ways that make it easier for the handicapped living in the community. The inter-relatedness of the various government agencies and actions is often overlooked.

MICHAEL CLAGUE:

What I would like to do now is share with you some of the main themes I took from the reports which synthesized the workshops, because these seemed to me to be benchmarks against which further plans and action can be laid.

The matter of participation was a recurrent theme in a number of the reports.

Secondly, the issues of choice and control over one's environment are important. The importance of the subject of security was touched on by almost everybody. Security was discussed in terms of adequate accommodation and also in terms of tenure, so that a person can stay where they choose as long as the accommodation is adequate, affordable and safe.

The question of income, and adequacy of finances was touched on by many groups. The issue of the adequacy of social assistance rates or more often the inadequacy of them, was underscored on a number of occasions.

Another issue raised which is particularly related to services, involves what I like to call 'tailoring' -- being able to arrange resources to fit the particular needs of each consumer. What seems to come through was that we continue to see the old problem of the client having to co-ordinate the services rather than the other way around.

Choice was also emphasized in one form or another. People should have some ability to choose the kind of accommodation necessary in order to live a decent life.

And the last point I noted was related to the question of the housing stock itself. The need for further and more complete availability of affordable housing to meet the kinds of housing requirements was reflected by the different groups today.

Excerpts from the closing remarks by Seno Cornely

For Dr. Cornely, the Conference's pragmatic approach to social housing was interpreted as a message of hope.

His speech outlined theoretical and practical elements implicit in homelessness in the third world, and linked homelessness to the broader issues of development and underdevelopment. For this he drew upon experiences from Latin America to show alternative strategies being employed.

The Latin American context:

(a) extreme concentration of power and income among elite and extreme poverty of popular masses;

(b) perennial alliance between the bourgeoisie in Latin America and foreign countries (especially transnational companies);

(c) new international labour divisions in the interests of oligopolies;

(d) Latin America is a producer and exporter of raw materials at lower and lower prices;

(e) insupportable weight of foreign debt and its extortionate interest rates;

(f) the export of the 'cures' of rich countries from the North to Latin America (eg: polluting industries, obsolete technologies, poisons of chemical industries including insidious laboratory products forbidden in northern countries, deforestation of the Amazon basin, dumping arms and weapons, provoking artificial wars between Latin American nations, etc)

According to the Brazilian Human Rights Association, 340,000 children died directly of hunger in 1986 - that is more than 1000 a day - while the international banks unilaterally increased their prime rates directly affecting our colossal foreign debt.

Today we have about 7 million children with no beds, no home, no power, no security, no hope and no future - inhaling glue or drinking strong alcohol in the streets, while waiting anxiously for an early death to finish their suffering. But how does this world context bear on the issue of homelessness? What are the ties between this savage world and homelessness?

The penetration of the large modern corporations (both Latin American and multi-nationals) into the countryside, occasions the rupture of the agrarian structure, thereby forcing millions of farmers out of their homes who then have to migrate to the cities. There, the farmer does not find a job in a labour market which is highly competitive. Finally, he ends up by settling in the urban periphery, usually without any infrastructure and very few facilities.

Our cities are already swelling, not just growing, and swelling is a symptom of pathology. This is the situation in our favellas - slum areas where millions of people survive in inhuman conditions, often without basic water supply, electricity, sewage collection, sanitary or hygienic facilities, without schools, health centres, without jobs or dignity-without future or hope.

It is not merely a matter of responding to the condition of problem individuals or minorities as it is in the case of rich countries (for example Canada's estimated 20-40,000 homeless). The vast majority of the population are excluded and subjugated by an inhuman system.

In June 1986, the head of PAHO, Dr. Carlyle Macedo concluded that those people experiencing "critical poverty" grew from 90 million in 1970 to 130 million in 1980 - an increase of 44 percent in only 10 years. This implies that more than one-third (35%) of the whole population of Latin America is being destroyed, living below minimal survival conditions.

Poverty in Latin America

Between 10 - 70 percent of all inhabitants of our major cities in Latin America, with very few exceptions, live in slums. One in four people in the beautiful city of Rio de Janeiro live in favelas; the numbers in Mexico City and Caracas are one in three. In Lima and Recife the number climbs to 50 percent, and in Port au Prince and Teresina it is 70 percent.

Thousands and thousands of Brazilians, Chileans, Peruvians, Mexicans, Guatemalans, etc, build some improvised shelter under highways, underpasses, bridges, public buildings, or just sleep in the streets, parks, or under trees. During the winter months, dictatorships in the southern countries every morning collected corpses of people who froze to death. Were these just the leftovers of the countries' systems?

Brazil has a deficit of more than 10 million houses, just to shelter our slum dwellers! We have to build annually more than 2 million just to address the needs of newly constituted families. We need the joint efforts of the public and private sectors.

With some changes we can shift these figures from one country to another within the region of Latin America.

Do we simply consider shelter and/or a house as a commodity to be bought and sold by people who can afford it? Or are we talking about a basic human need, a right for every person, independent of the size or value of his or her savings account? Some of the surveys undertaken recently have demonstrated the increasing proportion of land values relative to the final cost of a 'house'. In the Porto Allegro metropolitan area this proportion has grown, in some areas from 20 percent in the early 1970s to more than 45 percent in 1980.

At the same time, hundreds of small land owners have disappeared and have been substituted by big, so-called land development companies, who now own more than 60 percent of the total area planned for future urban expansion. All of the development companies are large conglomerates which include

banks, financial and investment companies, some of whom have open and *direct connections with multinational corporations.*

Can land simply (or simplistically) be considered to be only a commodity? Is it justifiable for speculators to buy semi-rural areas at relatively low cost (in comparison to what is paid to the 'peasants') and hold the land until the city grows (or more realistically, swells), or until the government invests the taxpayers' money to provide the infrastructure, and then sell the land reaping massive profits? The alternatives are that governments take the responsibility for controlling these vacant lands, or else, as is happening more and more, the people, the poor and disenfranchised help themselves!

We are perfectly, and painfully, aware that these are short term measures, and that we need to focus on the medium-range and long-term to effect solutions. But, it does provide a breathing space and perhaps more importantly, it does help the grass roots groups to be encouraged, to become organized and to solidify their base for the next steps in the ongoing struggle. The long term solutions are essentially and fundamentally political, to the extent that it is in the political arena that structural decisions have to be made.

SEVEN BACKGROUND PAPERS

PREPARED FOR

IYSH·1987

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 15 - 16 , 1987 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
VANCOUVER , B.C. CANADA

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UBC

Seven Background Papers
for

A PLACE TO CALL HOME
A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN B.C.

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BACKGROUND PAPER # 1

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BACKGROUND
PAPER # 1

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: THE U.N.'S YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

IYSH·1987

1. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT:

THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

"In 1976, when Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements was held, at Vancouver, governments collectively recognized that there was a crisis in human settlements.

"Since then, the condition of human settlements, particularly in developing countries, has worsened.

"Despite efforts by governments and by the poor themselves, the number of people living in poverty and squalor grows steadily larger, totalling now 1 billion, or over one quarter of the earth's population.

"The approaches of the past have clearly been inadequate, and at present, slow and uneven economic growth is forcing many governments to reorder priorities and reduce expenditures."

A. Ramachandran, Executive Director
U.N. Centre for Human Settlements, Nairobi

1.1. 1987 -- THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SHELTER FOR THE HOMELESS

In designating 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, the United Nations General Assembly, in 1982, defined two broad objectives. By 1987 nations were:

> "to achieve a measurable improvement in the actual living conditions of some of the world's poor"
>
> and between 1987 and 2000,
>
> "to refine, improve and implement, on a much broader scale, the approaches and techniques already demonstrated." [1]

To achieve these objectives, the U.N. General Assembly defined the following four goals.

(1) "To secure renewed political commitment by national Governments to the improvement of the shelter and neighbourhoods of the poor and disadvantaged;

(2) "To consolidate and share new and existing knowledge and experience gained since Habitat: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements;

(3) "To develop and demonstrate new and existing approaches and methods directly, and to augment the present efforts of the homeless, poor and disadvantaged to secure their own shelter; and

(4) "To exchange experience and provide support among countries to meet the objectives of IYSH." [2]

The emphasis of the U.N. is on improving "human settlements", that is, both homes and neighbourhoods. The focus is on housing issues, very broadly defined.

1.2. MORE THAN FOUR WALLS AND A ROOF: GOOD QUALITY HOMES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Director of the of IYSH for the U.N.'s Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), Ingrid Munro, points to the need to build desirable "human settlements" for a world which, by the year 2010, will be over 50% urbanized.

> "'Adequate shelter' must be recognized as being more than four walls and a roof: at the very least adequate shelter also includes security of tenure/occupation, and reasonable access to infrastructure, basic services and employment. Governments are therefore urged to recognize that 'human settlements' cannot be regarded as

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1. International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), Nairobi, Kenya, no date, p.2.

2. Ibid.

> merely a sectoral activity in national development plans. Human settlements are the final product in terms of built/living environments of all sectoral activities." [3]

This is quite a challenge, given that about one billion people, a quarter of the world's population, are estimated to live in absolute poverty. Of these, the U.N. estimates that about 100 million have no shelter whatsoever while most of the remainder live in extremely inadequate shelters and unhealthy environments.

In addition, living conditions of the poor have, in many places, deteriorated during the past decade. "Thus," Munro argues, "increased and changed government action is necessary, even merely to avoid a continuous increase in the number of homeless and poor living in appalling shelter and neighbourhoods." [4]

It is with these issues in mind that the U.N. designated a special year to focus on housing and neighbourhoods. The focus is to help move human settlements issues higher on national and international agendas. Governments tend to perceive human settlement issues, and particularly housing for the poor, as mainly a social welfare problem in which the government provides costly services. This is considered the major constraint:

> "One of the major constraints facing the shelter sector as a whole has been the fact that it is largely perceived, along with human settlements in general, as peripheral to the development process and offering little or no return in concrete economic terms. This applies equally to the priority given to the allocation of international development assistance....In terms of national budget allocations, the human settlements sector has also been neglected, in spite of its vital role where the development of other sectors is concerned." [5]

3. I. Munro (1987) "International Year of Shelter for the Homeless," Cities: the International Quarterly on Urban Policy, 4(1), February, p. 6.

4. Ibid., p. 5.

5. Y. de Boer (1985) "The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless: Aims and National and International Action," Cities, 2(4), November, p. 348.

The U.N. hopes to document and convince decision makers of the immense contribution which the human settlement sector (house construction, building materials, engineering and design activities) can make to overall economic development.

Living conditions can only be improved if nations allocate their resources more appropriately. As part of the IYSH each country is being urged to draw up a comprehensive shelter strategy that would direct activities toward improving housing and neighbourhoods for all by the year 2000. As noted in a recent report by the Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia:

> "addressing homelessness, and the needs of the poor and disadvantaged, requires a structured response to a wide range of issues including guaranteed access to land, security of tenure in affordable and adequate housing, primary health care, as well as ready access to infrastructure, basic services, education, training and above all, employment." [6]

1.3. TOWARD NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PLANS OF ACTION

In order to make progress, a plan of action is required. The following outline identifies seven major elements of a successful strategy.

(1) recognizing the problem;
(2) establishing realistic goals and objectives;
(3) securing political commitment at every level;
(4) making financial resources available;
(5) taking care of the necessary institutional matters, including legislative ones;
(6) solving technical and structural problems; and
(7) choosing and developing appropriate technologies. [7]

6. H.P. Oberlander and A.L. Fallick (1987) Shelter or Homes? A Contribution to the Search for Solutions to Homelessness in Canada, A Progress Report, Vancouver: The Centre for Human Settlements, University of British Columbia, pp. 1-2.

7. Ibid., p. 2.

There is no prospect of implementing such a strategy if national governments do not first recognize the nature and extent of the problem. The U.N. designation of a special year focused on shelter and the many national and regional conferences are intended to inform the public and urge the development of appropriate policies and programs.

A national co-ordinated course of action -- a policy and an appropriate range of programs -- must be developed if conditions will cease getting worse and begin to get better. Few governments, however, are willing to accept the U.N.'s definition of the problem, the U.N's IYSH goals and objectives, the U.N.'s decision to legitimize homelessness as serious social problem, and, finally, the U.N.'s attempt to define and implement a plan of action. The problem is fundamentally a political one. Housing for the poor has been a low priority on the political agenda of most countries. Rather than a comprehensive policy most countries implement small scale programs or isolated demonstration projects which, well helpful, fail to address the real problems.

The International Year of Shelter for the Homeless will be successful if Canadians throughout the country develop local, regional and eventually national programs of action directed at three levels.

(1) POLITICAL COMMITTMENT regarding the importance of housing issues and the need to give them adequate support and attention;

(2) POLICY-LEVEL COMMITMENT to creating the administrative framework that will allow an adequate approach to housing problems on an integrated basis; and

(3) POLICY and PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION, the testing, review, implementation and exchange of experience on solutions that address need and affordability. [8]

Acknowledgement:

written by David Hulchanski, School of Community and Regional Planning, U.B.C.,
with the assistance of Arthur L. Fallick, Centre for Human Settlements, U.B.C.

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8. de Boer (1985), p. 342.

BACKGROUND PAPER # 2

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BACKGROUND
PAPER # 2

WHO ARE THE HOMELESS ?

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS ?

IYSH·1987

2. WHO ARE THE HOMELESS? WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

DEFINING THE ISSUE

THE HOMELESS. -- "The homeless can be divided into two groups: the absolute homeless who inhabit the streets by day and either seek refuge at night in emergency shelters or who sleep outside, hiding from the elements and society; and those whose tenuous hold on economic and social stability place them 'at risk' of becoming homeless. The former are few in number, the latter substantial and growing rapidly."

HOMELESSNESS. -- "Homelessness in Canada is the absence of a continuing or permanent home over which individuals or family groups have personal control and which provides the essential needs of shelter, privacy and security at an affordable cost, together with ready access to social and economic public services."

The Centre for Human Settlements,
University of British Columbia

2.1. DEFINING AND GAINING "LEGITIMATE STATUS" FOR A SOCIAL PROBLEM

There is a great deal of confusion and debate over who ought to be counted as being homeless and how the problem of homelessness should be defined.

At the root of the current debate we find differing perceptions about why homelessness exists. Underlying assumptions about the way society is and ought to be play a very large role in the way homeless people and the issue of homelessness are perceived. The terms "homeless" and "homelessness" are very imprecise labels. The way these labels are used by people, organizations and governments depends upon the reason for raising them as issues in the first place (for example, to redress an income, housing, employment or other manifest socio-economic problem). In similar fashion, a refusal to recognize homelessness as a legitimate social problem provides a clear indication of a different agenda.

Without an agreed upon definition, there is no "legitimate" social problem to be addressed and, as a result, there can be no agreed upon course of action -- the development of policy, programs and projects. The question of a broadly endorsed definition, therefore, is much more than one of semantics. The way a problem is defined embodies a conception of what the causes are and what the solution ought to be.

The fact that some Canadians lack shelter is not new. Yet, during the 1980's homelessness has appeared on the public agenda as a significant social and political issue. Out of all the conditions and situations which prevail in Canada, only a few are seen by the majority of citizens and political leaders as "social problems." For homelessness to be a social problem it is necessary but far from sufficient for there to be widespread homelessness. "Social problems are fundamentally products of a process of collective definition instead of existing independently as a set of objective social arrangements with an intrinsic makeup." [1] As such, social problems are always the focal point for divergent and conflicting interests, intentions and objectives.

Unless some substantial agreement develops, the issue will not move beyond the status of a "cause" of some special interest group. A cause which never gains societal legitimacy can, at best, expect to obtain minor concessions from the rest of society if it lobbies effectively (such as a demonstration project or a small remedial program). Only "legitimate" social problems, those few which gain widespread recognition and agreement on its causes and potential solutions, can expect to be the focus of a policy -- a coordinated course of action.

The current political debate over homelessness in economically advanced countries such as Canada and the United States is best perhaps understood as a contest over the policy status this issue will eventually obtain. It could break through into the arena of serious public consideration and public action, or it could be dismissed as relatively insignificant and gradually blend into the accepted order of things. This explains why much of the public discussion of homelessness, at this stage of its development as a public issue, is preoccupied with making numerical and normative claims.

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1. H. Blumer (1971) "Social Problems as Collective Behavior," Social Problems, 18(3), Winter, p. 298.

2.2. DEFINING "HOMELESS"

It is important to distinguish between homeless individuals and homelessness as an issue. They are not the same. Yet this distinction is not always made. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that there is no "objective" definition of either one of these terms. They can be defined narrowly or broadly, depending upon the objectives and values of the person or organization doing the defining.

It is necessary, however, for a generally agreed upon definition of both to eventually emerge. Without broad agreement on the nature and extent of the problem, there can be no agreement on what solutions should be implemented.

There are indeed difficult, if not impossible, problems to be overcome in actually counting the homeless. This methodological problem, however, is minor compared to the broader conceptual problem of determining who ought to be counted and why. If only those who have no shelter on any given night are to be counted, we have one number; if we take this number and add to it all those who have shelter which does not meet minimum health and safety standards, we not only have a much larger number of homeless but a much broader social problem. It is broader in the sense that much more needs to be "solved" than just providing temporary shelter to people without a roof over their heads on a given night.

There seem to be four basic options for defining who the homeless are:

(1) people without any shelter on a given night;

(2) the first group plus those forced to sleep in temporary shelters;

(3) both of the above groups plus those who are forced to live in substandard housing (i.e., housing which seriously violates health and building standards);

(4) the above three groups plus those who have to spend an inordinate proportion of their income to obtain decent quality housing, such that other aspects of living, such as proper diet, are seriously affected.

The selection of a definition depends on many factors. Any level of government, for example, has a "self-interest" in using the most narrow definition. The use of a broader definition makes the problem that much more serious. By admitting that there is a very serious problem implies that something should be done about it.

The 1984 study of the homeless in the United States by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is an example of the use by a government agency of a very narrow definition. According to the HUD study a person is homeless if his or her "nighttime residence" is in an emergency shelter or "in the streets, parks, subways, bus terminals, railroad stations, airports, under bridges or aqueducts, abandoned buildings without utilities, cars, trucks, or any other public or private space that is not designated for shelter." In general, according to HUD, people who "have a roof over their heads...are not homeless."

> "Homeless people are distinguished from those who have permanent shelter even though that shelter may be physically inadequate. They are also distinguished from those living in overcrowded conditions." [2]

This is an example of the #2 option for defining the homeless.

The media coverage spawned by the increasingly visible nature of the problem as well as estimates that two to three million Americans are homeless was politically embarrassing in view of budget cuts to housing and social welfare programs. The Reagan Administration, therefore, has a particular self-interest in defining the problem as narrowly as possible. People who are politically conservative also tend to define the problem very narrowly, or even deny that it is much of a problem. For example, in 1984 President Reagan claimed that there has always been some homeless people "even in the best of times," that we are only more aware of it now, and that, in any case, people are homeless "by choice." [3]

The HUD study was undertaken shortly after the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) of the Department of Health and Human Services reported, based on estimates provided by advocacy groups, that as many as 2

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2. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (1984) A Report to the Secretary on the Homeless and Emergency Shelters, Washington, D.C.: HUD, Office of Policy Development and Research, p. 7.

3. "Coming in from the Cold: A Deep Freeze Exposes the Plight of Up to 2 Million Homeless," Time Magazine, February 4, 1985, p. 23.

million may be homeless nationwide. The NIMH developed a working definition of a homeless person as

> "anyone who lacks adequate shelter, resources, and community ties." [4]

This is definition #3 from the above four options. It is important to note that HUD's estimate was based not only on a more narrow definition but also on a now widely challenged method of counting.

The debate in the U.S. over numbers and definitions continues. It is clearly much more than a numerical and methodological debate. It is essentially a public policy debate over what will be become the "legitimate" definition of homelessness to which policy will be expected to respond.

2.3. DEFINING "HOMELESSNESS"

Any attempt to understand and then address the issue of homelessness must start by defining it. If the definition views homelessness as a housing problem, the response will focus largely on housing issues. If homelessness is perceived as a temporary problem, then the response need only be short term in scope (e.g., construction of a few projects). If homelessness is seen as an individual's problem, then the response will focus either on blaming the victim or on assisting the individual. These assumptions are found either explicitly or implicitly in any definition of homelessness.

One of the best Canadian studies of homelessness was carried out in 1983 by a group of directors, board members and staff of social service agencies and clergy of inner city Toronto churches.

Known as the Single Displaced Persons' Project, they published a report based on their first hand knowledge of the homeless "to offer a deeper and better-informed analysis of homelessness and to propose the provision of long-term, supportive housing as an alternative strategy to the provision of emergence shelter." [5]

They estimated that there were about 4,000 homeless in Metro Toronto in 1982, based on the approximately 2,130 hostel beds available and an estimate of another 1,800 actually without shelter. This does not include people caught in a cycle of having and losing housing and people living in extremely inadequate situations.

The report offers a definition of homelessness focused on those characteristics necessary for someone to have a "home" rather than just a roof over their head.

> "Homelessness is the condition of low-income people who cannot find adequate, secure housing at a price they can afford. The most obvious element of homelessness is the lack of housing: but just as "home" is more than physical shelter, "homelessness" includes a lack of this base for the rest of life's activities. "Home" is associated with personal identity, family, relationships, a role in the community, privacy and security, and the possession of personal property. Homelessness or the lack of a home affects all these areas of an individual's life." [6]

The mention of "secure" housing extends the definition beyond those who currently lack shelter. There are many more trapped in a cycle of having and losing housing.

This definition of homelessness is similar to that used by the United Nations. The U.N.'s focus is on all aspects of "human settlements": good quality housing units, security of tenure, adequate community services, and a safe, healthy and humane living environment. This broad approach to defining the issue is in sharp contrast to a narrow definition. The U.S. H.U.D. study of homelessness provides an example of one of the most narrow definitions possible: "'Homelessness' refers to people in the 'streets' who, in seeking shelter, have no alternative but to obtain it from a private

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4. Cited in: U.S. General Accounting Office (1985) Homelessness: A Complex Problem and the Federal Response, Washington, D.C. (GAO/HRD-85-40), p. 4.

5. B. Bosworth, E. Freiler et al. (1983) The Case for Long-Term, Supportive Housing, Toronto: Single Displaced Persons' Project, p. 5.

6. Ibid., p. 7.

or public agency." [7] This equates the issue of homelessness with a very narrow definition of homeless individuals.

The 1983 report of the Single Displaced Persons' Project also discusses the causes of homelessness. Noting that homelessness is more than a situation experienced by individuals, the lack of appropriate, permanent, affordable housing is seen as the result of a complex social and economic dynamic.

> "The homeless are at the bottom of the social, economic and housing system in Canada, with structural barriers frustrating their efforts to break out of that position." [8]

The authors note that there is a tendency to seek explanations in individual personal problems which can be "diagnosed" and "cured" and that the homeless are then categorized (as alcoholic, handicapped, lazy, or even "socially retarded"), thereby avoiding analysis of the broader socio-economic context.

> "When we cannot find adequate diagnoses, we tend to blame the victim for her/his situation ('He wouldn't be that way if he just tried a little harder to find a job' or 'She wouldn't be on the street if she had stayed with hew family'). Blaming the victim fails to take into account the economic and social realities behind the homelessness of the individual (unemployment and violence in the family, for instance). Even when our explanations move beyond the individual's failures or diagnosed problems, we tend to minimize the gravity of the situation by dismissing it as temporary ('a bed for the night,' 'a cup of coffee')....By focusing on the most visible and eccentric individuals we sustain the myth that the majority of homeless people are happy with their poverty, choose not to work, and seek to 'bum' off the rest of society." [9]

Unlike other studies, the report not only offers a definition of homelessness, but complains about the way the "housing problem" in general has been defined. Some aspects of housing have been defined as legitimate "problems" for many decades, and a variety of policies and programs have been implemented. According to the Single Displaced Persons' Project:

> "We tend to view housing as a consumer item to be purchased by those who can afford it or as an investment option to maximize profit. In responding to the homeless, we have tended to offer short-term shelter at minimal cost. Without a shift in our values regarding housing, homelessness will persist as a social phenomenon and we can expect further increases in the numbers of homeless men and women in our cities. To counteract this trend, housing should be considered a basic right. 'Housing' should also be understood to mean more than simple shelter. Shelter provides for physical survival, but secure housing provides a stable base for living. With long-term, supportive housing, individuals are better able to cope with personal problems, to make appropriate use of support services, and to decrease or even eliminate their dependency on the social service system. This kind of housing is a fundamental human need and should be available to all, regardless of income." [10]

Unless the "problem" is defined in this fashion, shelters and transitional residences are the likely response to homelessness. "A shift in our values regarding housing demands a similar shift in the priorities of governments, churches, and social services...moving beyond 'crisis' or 'emergency' responses to provide long term housing that can become 'home'." [11]

The report recommends "supportive housing" situations if homeless people are to improve their situation in ways they choose. Supportive housing is defined as "a long term residence that is small enough to encourage mutual support among the residents and has staff that are enablers of the residents' goals." [12]

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7. U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (1984), p. 7.
8. The Case for Long-Term, Supportive Housing, p. 8.
9. Ibid., pp. 8-9.
10. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
11. Ibid., p. 21.
12. Ibid., p. 22.

2.4. HOMELESSNESS AND THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

In 1982, when the U.N. General Assembly designated 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, one of the objectives was to have every country achieve a measurable improvement in the actual living conditions of some of the poor. Most measures of poverty and the living conditions of lower income Canadians clearly indicate that conditions are worse in 1987 than in 1980. It is estimated that there are some 800,000 more Canadians living in poverty in the mid-1980's than there were in the late 1970's. [13]

In spite of these trends, there has been no Canadian government study of the homeless or of homelessness. The word cannot even be found in any of the recent major housing policy documents of the federal government. These include:

* the January 1985 Consultation Paper on Housing;
* the June 1985 housing report of the Task Force on Program Review (the Neilson Committee), Housing Programs in Search of Balance; and
* the December 1985 announcement of federal housing policy, A National Direction for Housing Solutions. [14]

Yet, even using a very conservative definition of housing need, CMHC estimates that, as of the early 1980's, more than 500,000 renter households cannot afford physically adequate and uncrowded accommodation and nearly 200,000 homeowners in Canada have serious housing affordability problems. [15] Despite this huge need for good quality affordable housing, the federal government asserts that "the housing market has worked well in Canada" [16] and that, in terms of social housing programs, "efforts are required to reduce, where possible, the magnitude of on-going expenditures."[17]

The Canadian government's only role in the IYSH appears to be the allocation of some funds to several groups who will carry out research and sponsor a national conference.

In formally announcing some of this funding, Stewart McInnes, the federal minister responsible for housing, did admit, apparently with some reluctance, that there are homeless people in Canada.

> "Granted. Things aren't perfect here. We do have poverty. There are some of our fellow human beings who are without shelter. But that shouldn't prevent us from trying to sell our way of life. Our self-criticism is extreme. [18]

This is an example of how difficult it is for some Canadians to admit that a problem as severe as actually being homeless can exist in Canada. Such an admission necessarily carries with it implied criticism of the way the social welfare and housing systems are functioning and further implies that a course of action -- policies and programs -- should be devised as quickly as possible.

In contrast to the opinion of Canada's Minister responsible for housing, we have the following assessment of the extent of the problem in Canada, by the Centre for Human Settlements at the University of British Columbia:

> "Recent analysis of the scope and scale of social and economic deprivations across urban Canada indicates that homelessness and the risk of becoming homeless are

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13. M. McLaughlin (1987) "Homelessness in Canada", Perception, 10(2), p. 24.

14. Canada, Minister Responsible for C.M.H.C. (1985) Consultation Paper on Housing, Ottawa: C.M.H.C. Canada, Task Force on Program Review (1985) Housing Programs in Search of Balance, Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada. Canada, Minister Responsible for C.M.H.C. (1985) A National Direction for Housing Solutions, Ottawa: C.M.H.C.

15. Consultation Paper on Housing, p. 10.

16. Consultation Paper on Housing, p. 20.

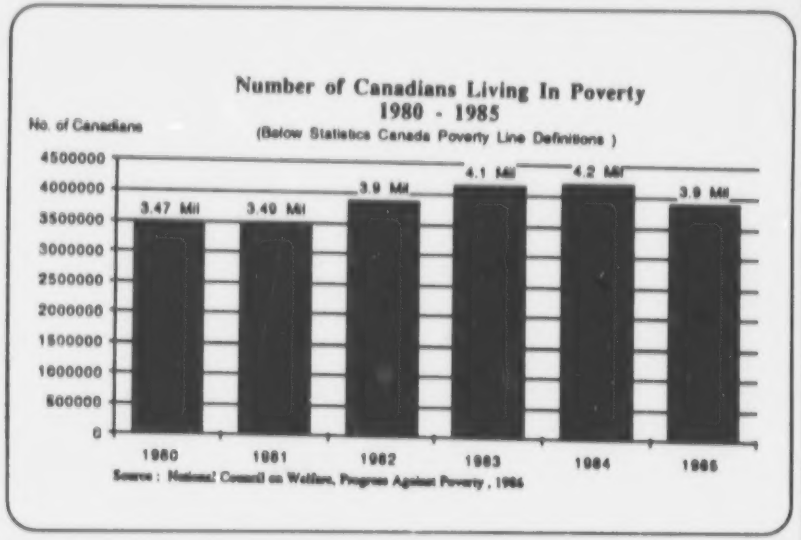
17. Housing Programs in Search of Balance, p. 21.

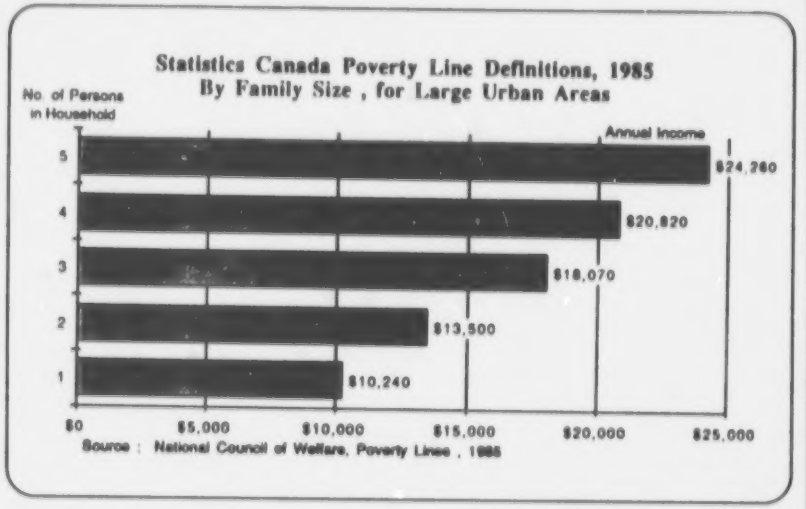
18. Stewart McInnes, "Speaking Notes for the Minister, Official Opening, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT) Information Office for North America and the Caribbean, York University, Toronto, March 3, 1987," p. 3.

affecting a broader spectrum of people in more areas of the city than at any time since the Great Depression, and that while there is a definite economic basis to the problem, it cannot be explained by the prevailing economic situation alone.

"The Canadian city is a crucible in which urban change and conflict are manifest, but where they also can be resolved. Homelessness, poverty and related deprivations are not fundamentally problems of the city. Rather, they are synergistic problems which exist in the city and are open to solution.

"To be effective, however, solutions must involve a structured response by all three levels of government in co-operation with the combined efforts of the private sector and voluntary organizations, and with continuing participation by the poor and homeless." [19]





Acknowledgement:

written by David Hulchanski, School of Community and Regional Planning, U.B.C.,
with the assistance of Arthur L. Fallick, Centre for Human Settlements, U.B.C.

19. Oberlander and Fallick (1987), p. 12.

BACKGROUND PAPER # 3

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 15-16, 1987 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA

BACKGROUND PAPER # 3

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

IYSH·1987

3. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

"More people are getting poor. And the poor are suffering greater depths of poverty. About 245,000 B.C. residents, including 85,000 children depend on welfare rates that range from 39% to about 52% of the poverty line. Another 210,000 are officially unemployed. Many more are unemployed but not counted. In addition, because wages are getting lower and part-time work is on the increase, 52% of poor people work. The number of poor B.C. families increased by 85% between 1981 and 1985."

End Legislated Poverty Coalition, Vancouver, 1987

"Of the five income quintile groups, only the top 20% [who account for 42% of household income] are better off in 1984 compared to 1980. The other four groups all experienced no growth or a slight decline in income after inflation. We expect that the high income group, the 'affluent market' will be the growth market for the next ten years due to:
--increasing number of two-income families;
--growth in the professional occupations;
--aging of the population into higher income brackets; and
--a large increase in inherited wealth."

Tomorrow's Customers in Canada,
Woods Gordon Management Consultants, 1984

"There is growing consensus that homelessness in Canada is attributable in part to the organization of the housing market. Evidence suggests that there are increasing numbers of people who require low rent, permanent and secure accommodation at a time when the stock of appropriate types of affordable housing is diminishing. The economic recessions of the 1980's have decimated the low cost end of the housing supply in most metropolitan areas in Canada and drastically increased rates of chronic and temporary unemployment."

Centre for Human Settlements, U.B.C., 1987

3.1. FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO INCREASED HOMELESSNESS

The explosion of the number of homeless people is the result of the confluence of political decisions, public policies and social and economic trends. The causes of homelessness are as diverse as the homeless themselves. They usually involve one or a combination of factors including

* income problems,
* work-related problems,
* health-related problems,
* problems with family and relationships, and
* problems relating to the affordability, adequacy or access to secure housing.

In its review of national and regional data, the U.B.C. Centre for Human Settlements concludes that despite the social and economic diversity of the homeless, there appear to be a number of recurring issues which contribute to homelessness in Canada. These are:

a) significant shortages of affordable housing, particularly for those on low and fixed incomes;

b) social assistance payments not keeping pace with inflation or need, resulting in insufficient financial resources; housing programs for special needs groups ceasing to keep pace or expand, and in some instances (e.g., rooming house stock) being significantly reduced through demolition;

c) conversions of existing and potential accommodation for upscale occupants reducing the available housing stock resulting in the displacement of vulnerable groups;

d) zoning restrictions precluding older single family residential districts from accommodating potential clients;

e) reductions in the number of available psychiatric beds, and the related policy of deinstitutionalization without compensating increased funding for community mental health and related social services support; and

f) native people drifting toward major cities in search of jobs and choice of life styles.

There are four significant structural changes taking place which have a direct bearing on a person or family becoming homeless, or being at risk of becoming homeless in Canada:

1. a transformation of the traditional resource-based and industrial economies (largely in the regions or the Western and Atlantic provinces);

2. a decline in government income assistance and restructuring of the social support system;

3. a fundamental reorientation in the care of the long-term mentally ill;

4. a significant decrease in the affordable housing stock especially in the metropolitan areas of Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

These structural changes mean that more and more people are finding themselves in economic and social hardship. In terms of housing, many more people are inadequately housed, with some lacking any shelter at all. Across Canada, it is increasingly common to find:

* people with no physical shelter;

* growing numbers relying on emergency shelter on an increasingly permanent basis;

* people living in inappropriate or substandard accommodation for which they are paying in access of 30% of their income; or who run the risk of being displaced as a result of urban change and revitalization projects;

* the marginally "at risk" whose rents are tied to social assistance payments (the gap between assistance and rents is widening); and

* people whose income is below the poverty line who are very susceptible to changing housing and social welfare policies. Their security and stability are often tenuous.

3.2. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The following identifies some of the key trends contributing to the increase in homelessness in British Columbia.

A. Employment Trends

Unemployment. Unemployment in British Columbia has been over 10% since 1982, higher than any province outside the Maritimes and Newfoundland. The average number of British Columbians out of work jumped from 88,000 in 1980 to 208,000 in 1984, a 136% increase. Since then, the unemployment rate has fallen slightly, from 14.7% in 1984 to 12.4% in 1986. (See Figure 1) The Canadian average in 1986 was 9.7%.

Figure 1

"Unofficial" Unemployment. The official unemployment figures are very low estimates. About 40% should be added to the official figures to account for:

* the hidden unemployed whose frustration has prompted them to abandon the futile search for a job;
* the partially employed -- those who want full-time work but can only find part-time work;
* women who would work at paid jobs if jobs and child care were available;
* people on government training programs.

The Working Poor. While unemployment is a major contributor to the increased poverty in B.C., most poor families have at least one member who works outside the home. In 1983, 57.8% of poor families had a head in the labour force. These are the working poor -- people with low wages or large families. In B.C. a person could work full-time at the minimum wage and still be $2,000 below the poverty line.

B. Poverty Trends

Income Distribution in B.C. There is a polarization between large numbers of very poor and very well off British Columbians. Over one quarter (27.2%) of all households in British Columbia have a household income under $15,000 while over one third (37%) have a household income over $35,000. (See Figure 2)

Statistics Canada Poverty Lines. Figure 3 provides the most recent poverty line definitions by family size for urban areas over 100,000 population.

Poverty in British Columbia. The number of families in poverty in B.C. has almost doubled between 1980 and 1984. (See Figure 4) About 120,000 families were living in poverty in 1984 compared to about 65,000 in 1980. The large number of single people living in poverty (131,000 in 1980) has also increased, but not as dramatically as families. About 142,000 single people were living in poverty in 1984. (See Figure 5)

Figure 2

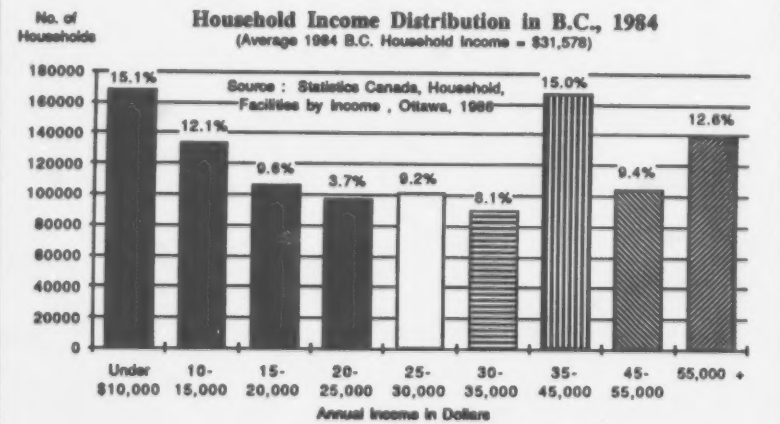


Figure 3

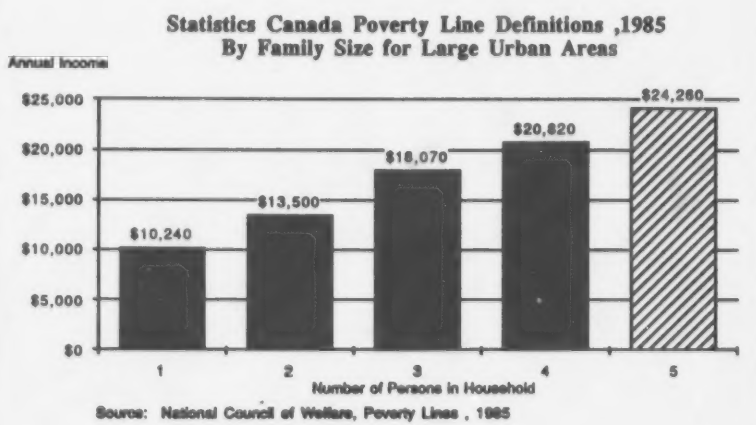


Figure 4

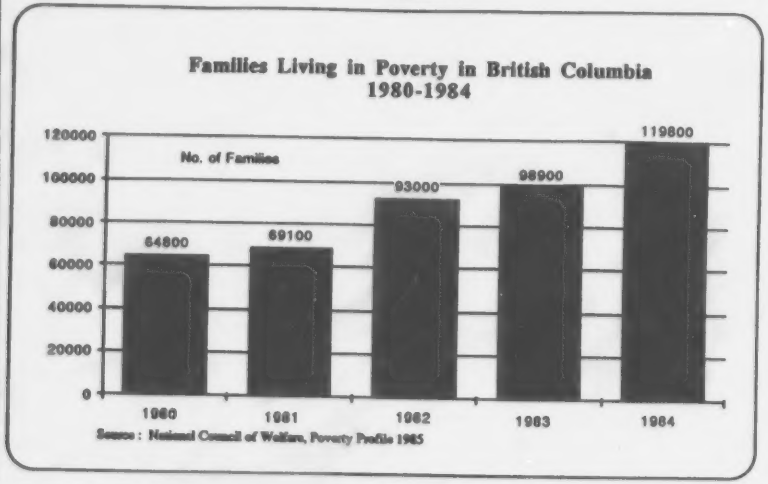
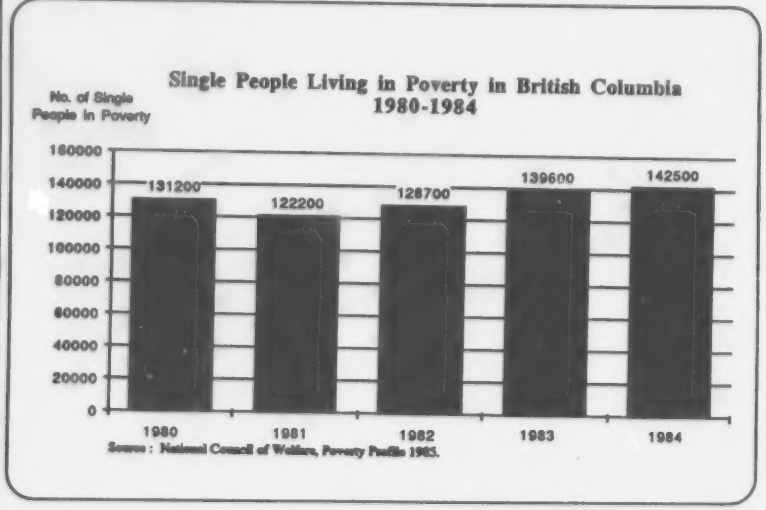


Figure 5

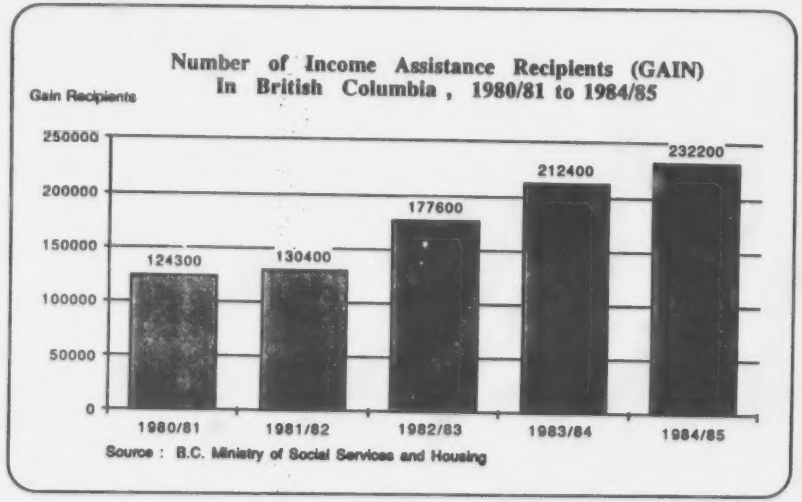


C. Income Assistance Trends

GAIN Recipients: The number of people receiving income assistance under the provincial GAIN program has increased by more than 100,000 between 1980/81 and 1984/85, from 125,000 to 232,000 people. (See Figure 6)

Adequacy of GAIN: One might assume that the people receiving welfare support under the GAIN program would not be living in extreme poverty. The program, however, has the effect of officially "legislating poverty" by paying income and shelter support rates well below the level necessary to meet average basic living costs. The gap between GAIN rates and the real cost of living has been calculated by the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia. Figure 7 provides a summary of the size of the gap. For GAIN rates to equal the average basic costs of living, increases of between 30% and 70% are necessary, depending on the size of the household. The inadequacy of the provincial welfare program is a major reason for the need for food banks and for growing numbers of inadequately housed families and the large numbers of homeless. Many GAIN recipients cannot adequately feed and shelter themselves.

Figure 6



D. **Deinstitutionalization**

Many people require special support for periods of time. The trend away from placing and keeping people in large institutions began in the 1960's and early 1970's. By now the population of the larger psychiatric institutions have been reduced and some facilities have been closed. The very large Riverview Psychiatric Hospital has declined from about 2,500 in the late 1960's to about 800 in recent years. (See Figure 8) This has saved government a lot of money but the support network in our communities has never been properly developed. Many of the homeless are people who require special kinds of assistance and support. They have difficulty living on their own or at least require an adequate transition period.

E. **Housing Trends**

Vancouver's cost of living, and in particular the cost of housing, is one of the most expensive in Canada. Other parts of the province face periodic boom and bust cycles placing extremely hardships on many families. The problem of finding appropriate and affordable housing, especially for families, has become very serious over the past ten years. CMHC estimates that 170,000 households, 16% of B.C.'s households, are in "core housing need," that is, they cannot obtain adequate and affordable housing.

The rental sector in B.C. is the major aspect of the housing problem. In particular, the supply of new rental housing will continue to be a major problem well into the next century. Low income people do not stimulate "market demand." They do not have the money to pay rents necessary to stimulate private rental housing investment. Virtually all middle and higher income households are leaving the rental sector to become home owners.

Rather than market demand, poor people generate social need. Yet most of our housing is provided by the private sector which can only respond to the demand stimulated by higher income households. Most housing starts are for owner occupied housing, both single family houses and condominiums. There is no money to be made in building housing for low and moderate income renters.

Figure 7

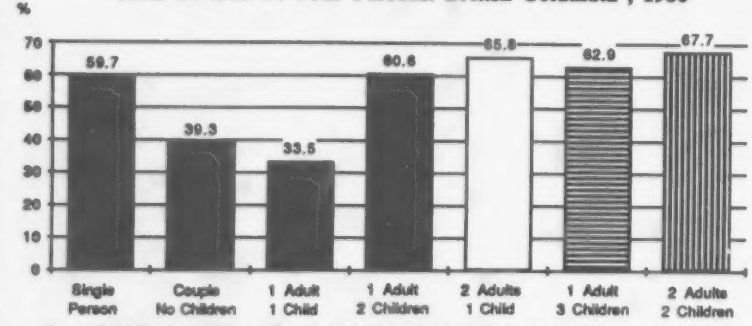


Figure 8

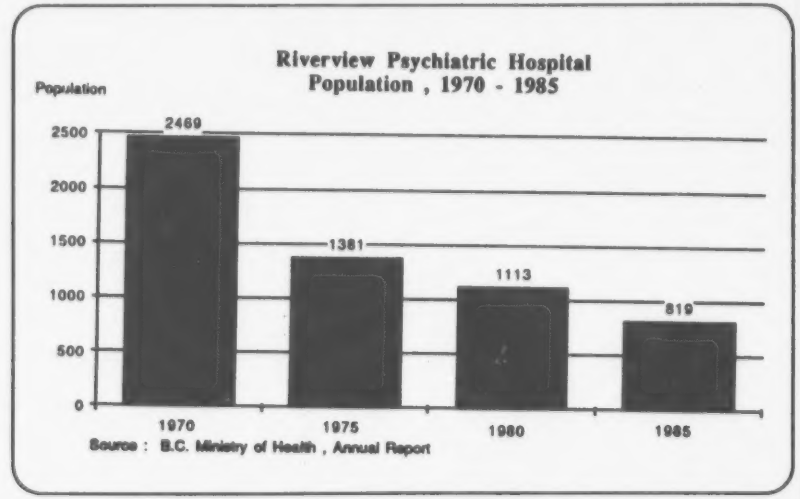


Figure 9

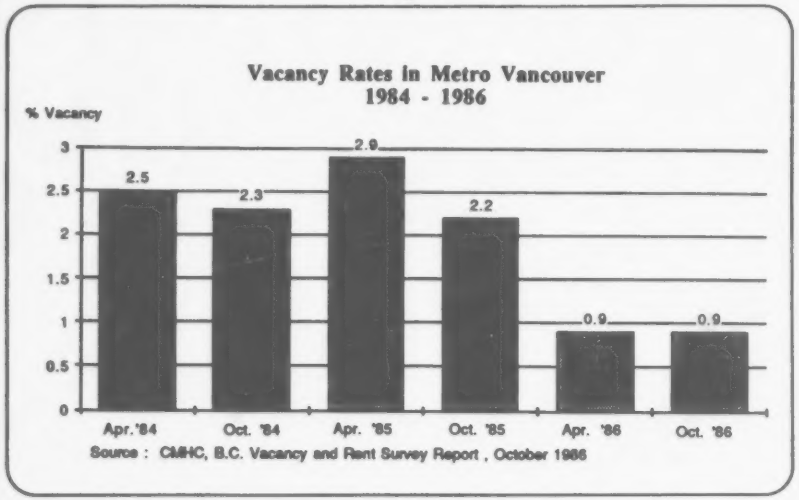
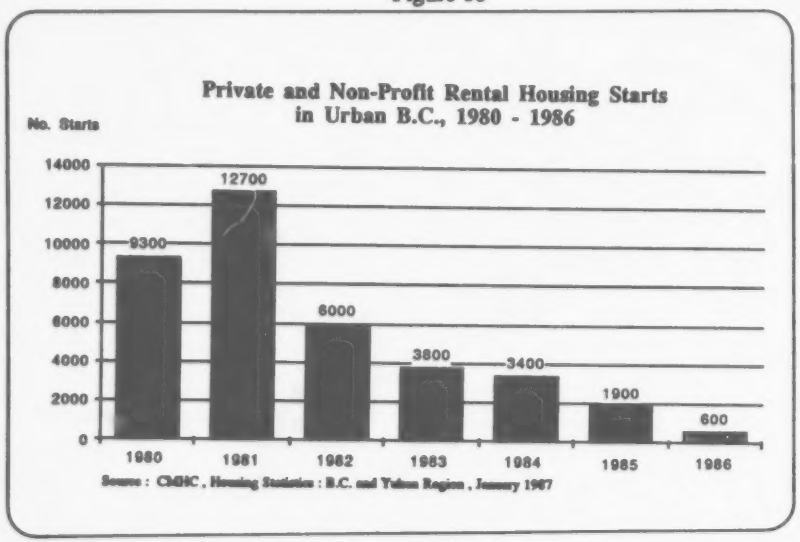


Figure 10



Recent rental market trends in B.C. clearly point to the serious nature of this problem. Vacancy rates have been below 3% and often below 1% in Vancouver for the past fifteen years. (See Figure 9) According to conventional economics, low vacancy rates are a market signal for investors to jump in and build more rental units. This is the case with owner occupied housing and condominiums. As soon as developers see an increase in demand, many will compete to meet this demand first and with the best product. From time-to-time, over building is a problem in the single family and condominium markets. Not so in the rental market.

Private and non-profit rental housing starts are at their lowest point in decades. In 1986, only 600 rental housing starts took place, in spite of the "Expo boom." Most of these were subsidized by the Federal non-profit housing program. Very few were private, non-subsidized rental starts.

Figure 10 shows the number of rental housing starts since 1980. Virtually all of these have been subsidized. The MURB rental housing tax incentive program and the Canada Rental Supply Program (CRSP) account for most of the private rental starts in 1980 to 1984. Once these programs were over, private rental starts virtually cease. The private rental sector cannot and will not supply the new rental housing British Columbia needs now or in the future.

In spite of these realities, the federal and provincial governments have been reducing their committment to social housing supply programs (private, public and co-op non-profit housing and rural and native housing). Social housing starts in B.C. have fallen from 5,200 in 1980 to 1,800 in 1986.

Acknowledgement:

written by David Hulchanski,
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Graphs produced by Danny Ho.

BACKGROUND PAPER # 4

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 15-16, 1987 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA

BACKGROUND
PAPER # 4

THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM AND HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

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4. THE SOCIAL WELFARE SYSTEM AND HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

If you are homeless in British Columbia, what options are available under the social welfare system? If you are poor, what type of income assistance programs are available to help prevent you from becoming homeless?

The following is a examination of the government sponsored social assistance programs that attempt to address the needs of the poor. The first section reviews recent social policy trends in B.C. The rest is a descriptive summary of the social welfare "safety net" in British Columbia. First the provincially administered programs are described, then the federally administered programs. In addition to these, there are a number of non-governmental agencies and organizations which provide services and shelter for homeless people. (These are not covered in this paper.)

4.1. RECENT TRENDS IN B.C. SOCIAL POLICY

In 1976 the provincial government consolidated its income assistance programs in the Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN) Act, giving the Ministry of Human Resources (now the Ministry of Social Services and Housing) the authority to disburse money for social services and income assistance. The stated objective of the GAIN program is to relieve poverty, neglect and suffering. The government establishes criteria to determine who is in need, how much aid is required, and how best to deliver the assistance. These regulations define B.C.'s income assistance policy.

GAIN has two major components. One provides general income support, the other provides money for shelter. Both are based on the size of the household. If the level of funding was based on real costs of living and if the levels were adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of living, it is safe to conclude that there would be a great deal less "poverty, neglect and suffering." Homelessness would not be the major issue it is today. There would be no need for food banks. A properly administered and financed social service system would ensure that no one could "fall through" the provincial social welfare safety net. However, the level of funding was never adequate to properly meet the basic needs of the poor and, as the result of B.C.'s restraint budgets of recent years, the gap has become even greater.

Until 1982, the regulations were amended almost annually in order to adjust benefit rates to changes in the Consumer Price Index. However, in the July 1983 budget, which introduced the "restraint" program, the government announced that it was going to "defer" the increase in GAIN rates. In addition, in February, 1984 the government removed certain groups from eligibility and then continued to defer any adjustment in GAIN rates. The rates were not changed until October 1986 when only the shelter component was increased by 4.5%. This increased the shelter allowances of a single person from $200 per month to $209 per month. In March 1987 the Minister for Social Services and Housing announced a 5% increase in support allowances for families, effective June 1, 1987. This is the first increase in the income support allowance since the early 1980's and applies only to families. Other catagories of social assistance recipients have still not received an income support increase in their GAIN rates.

The combined effect of the restraint budgets on social assistance rates and the failure to adjust for the impact of inflation reduced the purchasing power of the poorest households in British Columbia by between 13% and 24% (depending on size and type of household) during the 1983 to 1985 period. [1]

The cash saving from these measures (1983 to 1985) has been approximately $350 million. Half of this amount would have been paid by the federal government's Canada Assistance Plan. The program is funded on a 50/50 federal/provincial basis. So B.C.'s share of the cost would have been about $175 million. According to Angela Redish, a U.B.C. economics professor:

> "But even this [$175 million] is an overestimate since the government would earn sales tax and income tax on transactions undertaken by recipients. A minimum estimate of this revenue is $50 million, so that the approximate cost to the government of maintaining the pre- 'restraint' level of benefits would have been $125

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1. A. Redish (1986) "Social Policy and 'Restraint' in British Columbia," in R.C. Allen and G. Rosenbluth, eds., Restraining the Economy: Social Credit Economic Policies for B.C. in the Eighties, Vancouver, New Star Books, p. 153.

million. On the other hand, it would have meant that over the last three years $350 million would have been pumped into the local economy, having a significant stimulative effect." [2]

Therefore, all of British Columbia is worse off, and especially the poorest households. For an investment of about $125 million, the B.C. economy could have benefited from a $350 million economic boost, half of which would have come from the federal government.

Redish's analysis of social policy in B.C. concludes with the following observations:

* "Social assistance payments are a form of automatic stabilizer for the economy, and by cutting income assistance rates the government has exacerbated the unemployment problem in the province."

* "The government's fiscal policy has had the effect of worsening the distribution of income in addition to lowering the level of employment." [3]

Food Banks in B.C. The impact of this approach to social policy has been so severe that, for the first time since the depression, food banks began to appear in the early 1980's throughout the province. A 1986 survey of food bank users in B.C. by the Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia (SPARC) found that:

* Food banks have become an established part of making ends meet for the vast majority of people using them. For welfare recipients in particular, who make up in total over 80% of users, the food banks have become an essential part of their daily survival.

* Food banks help over 40,000 people in B.C. who make about 70,000 food bank visits each month, but the needs of the hungry far exceed the assistance food banks can provide.

* 74% of users were on GAIN (income assistance), and over one-half of these had been on welfare for two years or more.

* Users' average income ranged from 37% to 50% of the respective poverty lines depending on household size.

* On average, users spent 55% of their meager incomes on shelter, and 33% of their money on food.

* Each user collected food to help feed an average of 2.3 people. Users with children collected food to help feed an average of 2.2 children.

* Users clearly identify government as most responsible for addressing the problem of hunger and reject the food bank as a solution. [4]

Poverty Rates in B.C. The clearest indicator of the inadequacy of GAIN and related programs is the number of people in British Columbia living in poverty. Between 1980 and 1984 the number of families in B.C. living below the Statistics Canada poverty line has almost doubled, from 64,800 families to 119,800 families. During the same period there has been a smaller increase in the number of single people living in poverty, from 131,200 in 1980 to 142,500 in 1984.

The Inadequacy of GAIN Rates. The GAIN program was designed with the aim of relieving poverty and suffering. However, not all poor people qualify for GAIN and GAIN rates are so low that recipients still lack the income necessary to meet average basic living costs. The number of GAIN

2. Ibid., p. 154.

3. Ibid., pp. 154, 156.

4. Social Planning and Review Council of British Columbia (1986) Food Bank Users: A Profile of the Hungry in B.C., Vancouver: SPARC.

recipients has increased from 124,300 in 1980 to 232,200 in 1984. An analysis of the cost of living in B.C. in relation to the level of GAIN benefits by the Social Planning and Research Council of B.C. has found that the rates are 30% to 70% below basic living costs depending on the size of the household. B.C.'s GAIN program, therefore, does not relieve poverty. It provides some assistance to recipients but not enough for them to meet basic living costs. Inadequate diet, overcrowded living conditions and in extreme cases, homelessness, are some of the results of a poorly funded income assistance program.

The next two sections describe the provincial and federal income assistance programs.

4.2. PROVINCIALLY ADMINISTERED PROGRAMS

A. Emergency Services

The B.C. Ministry of Social Services and Housing (MSSH) provides emergency services to persons who contact their local MSSH office before 4:30 p.m. or through the emergency telephone number after 4:30 and on weekends. Emergency shelter is provided to all persons who apply and meet the criteria of the Guaranteed Available Income for Need (G.A.I.N.) program.

MSSH in the Vancouver area contracts out to private agencies who guarantee the availability of emergence shelter for MSSH cases. At present MSSH reserves 230 hostel units (beds) per day in Vancouver. On average MSSH places 200 people in these hostels.

MSSH provides emergency shelters (room and board) for women and children during a period of crisis. In 1984-85, the ministry provided funding for 30 emergency shelter facilities and 10 Safe Homes. A Crisis Grant is available to persons who are without assets, income or other resources to meet an emergency.

For persons under 18 years of age who apply for emergency shelter MSSH provides assistance if it has the permission of the applicant's guardian, or if there is evidence of child abuse.

B. Guaranteed Available Income for Need (GAIN)

GAIN is the most important program for addressing the needs of the homeless and those at risk of being homeless in British Columbia. The program is designed to help families and individuals during a period of financial difficulty. It is funded on a 50/50 Federal/Provincial cost sharing basis under the federal government's Canada Assistance Plan (CAP).

The GAIN program is designed to provide:

* financial assistance to persons in need;
* welfare services to persons who are in need or likely to become in need unless such services are provided; and
* work activity projects designed to improve the employability of persons who have unusual difficulty in finding or retaining a job or undertaking job training.

There are three types of GAIN assistance: GAIN basic income assistance; GAIN for the handicapped; and GAIN for senior citizens.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA. The basic criteria for establishing eligibility for receiving GAIN include: (1) eligibility is based upon a needs test established by the province (not the federal government); and (2) a province may not establish a minimum residency requirement for either residency in B.C. or in Canada as a condition of eligibility for assistance.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS. In order to apply for GAIN in B.C. a person must:

* be 19 years of age or older;
* have proof of identification;
* have data on ones financial situation (savings, assets, housing costs, number of dependents, etc.); and
* have information on ones job situation.

INCOME FROM OTHER SOURCES. Before a person applies for GAIN Income Assistance, applicants must check to see if they are eligible for income from other sources, such as: workers compensation; unemployment benefits (UIC); union or lodge benefits; pensions or veterans' benefits;

GUARANTEED AVAILABLE INCOME FOR NEED

OCTOBER 1986

Basic Income Assistance Benefits

(a) Effective October 1, 1986, the following rates apply for single recipients and couples without children.

FAMILY UNIT SIZE	CATEGORY OF RECIPIENT	SUPPORT ALLOWANCE	SHELTER VARIABLE	TOTAL
1	Age 25 or under, 1st month	$125.00	$209.00	$334.00
1	Age 25 or under, 2nd to 8th month	150.00	209.00	359.00
1	Age 25 or under, after 8 months, employable	175.00	209.00	384.00
1	Age 25 or under, after 8 months, unemployable	230.00	209.00	439.00
1	Age 26 or over, 1st month	150.00	209.00	359.00
1	Age 26 or over, 2nd to 8th month	175.00	209.00	384.00
1	Age 26 or over, after 8 months, employable	175.00	209.00	384.00
1	Age 26 or over, after 8 months, unemployable	230.00	209.00	439.00
2	Couple, both aged 25 or under, 1st month	230.00	356.00	586.00
2	Couple, both aged 25 or under, 2nd to 8th month	255.00	356.00	611.00
2	Couple aged 25 or under, after 8 months, employable	280.00	356.00	636.00
2	Couple aged 25 or under, after 8 months, unemployable	335.00	356.00	691.00
2	Couple, at least one aged 26 or over, 1st month	255.00	356.00	611.00
2	Couple, at least one aged 26 or over, 2nd to 8th month	280.00	356.00	636.00
2	Couple, at least one aged 26 or over, after 8 months, employable	280.00	356.00	636.00
2	Couple, at least one aged 26 or over, after 8 months, unemployable	335.00	356.00	691.00

(b) Effective October 1, 1986, the following rates apply for all family units with dependent children who are in current receipt of basic income assistance for a period of LESS than eight consecutive calendar months. These rates also apply for employable family units with dependent children who have been in receipt of income assistance in excess of eight months.

FAMILY UNIT SIZE	SUPPORT ALLOWANCE	SHELTER VARIABLE	TOTAL
2 persons	$300.00	$356.00	$ 656.00
3	360.00	429.00	789.00
4	415.00	476.00	891.00
5	470.00	518.00	988.00
6	530.00	533.00	1,063.00
7	585.00	549.00	1,134.00
8	635.00	570.00	1,205.00
9	685.00	591.00	1,276.00
10*	735.00	612.00	1,347.00

c) Effective October 1, 1986, the following rates apply for unemployable family units who have been in receipt of income assistance for a period in excess of eight consecutive calendar months. These rates also apply to recipients who are aged 60 to 64 years or to family units where a member of the unit is aged 60 to 64. There is no eight month reduction in benefits for persons aged 60 to 64 years.

FAMILY UNIT SIZE	SUPPORT ALLOWANCE	SHELTER VARIABLE	TOTAL
1 person	$230.00	$209.00	$ 439.00
2	335.00	356.00	691.00
3	395.00	429.00	824.00
4	450.00	476.00	926.00
5	505.00	518.00	1,023.00
6	565.00	533.00	1,098.00
7	620.00	549.00	1,169.00
8	670.00	570.00	1,240.00
9	720.00	591.00	1,311.00
10*	770.00	612.00	1,382.00

* Add $50.00 per month support allowance and up to $20.00 per month shelter variable for each family member in excess of a Unit 10.

Source: Social Planning & Research Council of British Columbia, March 1987.

and, if the applicant is separated or divorced, it is expected that every effort has been made to obtain assistance from the former spouse.

The following sources of income do not affect the level of GAIN benefits: family allowance payments; federal child tax credit payments; foster home payments; money earned by dependent children from part-time jobs after school or on weekends or holidays.

ALLOWABLE ASSETS. An applicant is allowed to have assets up to a certain level and still remain eligible for income assistance. These assets include cash, money in bank accounts, stocks, bonds, land or houses, and other possessions that may be sold for cash. The following are B.C.'s allowable asset limits for different categories of applicants.

Transient	$ 5	
Single employable person < 55	$ 160	
Single unemployable person < 55	$ 500	
Single person age 55 to 59	$ 1,500	
Person under 55 with one dependent	$ 2,500	Plus $300 for each additional dependent
Single person age 60 to 64	$ 2,500	
Person age 60 to 64 with dependents	$ 5,000	

The possessions which are not considered assets are: the family home; one motor vehicle; household equipment and clothes; life insurance policy with a cash surrender value of $1,500 or less; five shares per family member in British Columbia Resources Investment Corporation (BCRIC)

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES. A person is not eligible for GAIN if he or she: quit their job; were fired for cause; refused to take a job regardless of the wages offered. B.C.'s regulations state:

> "people who are able to work must demonstrate that they have been actively seeking work and are continuing to do so. This means presenting yourself in a manner acceptable to prospective employers."

GAIN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RATES. GAIN rates in British Columbia did not change from 1982 to October, 1986. The 1986 increases in GAIN were relatively modest.

CHANGE IN THE NUMBER OF GAIN RECIPIENTS. The average number of GAIN recipients (including dependents) has increased from about 125,000 in the 1980/81 fiscal year to over 230,000 in 1984/85.

4.3. OTHER GAIN-RELATED PROVINCIAL PROGRAMS

There are a number of other services, benefits and supplementary allowances available to GAIN recipients.

A. Earnings Exemption Program

The Earnings Exemption Program allows GAIN recipients, who have been on income assistance for more than three consecutive months, to earn up to $50.00 a month, for a single person, and up to $100 a month for persons with dependents. These earnings will not be deducted from the standard GAIN rate. In some cases a recipient can be eligible for the Enhanced Earnings Exemption that will entitle recipients to retain without penalty an additional 25% above the established flat rate.

B. Income Supplement Program

The Income Supplement Program provides a cash subsidy to employed people whose income from work and other sources is less than the amount they would receive from GAIN. The supplement will bring their income up to a level equal with the GAIN rate.

C. GAIN for the Handicapped

GAIN for the handicapped provides monthly benefits to eligible handicapped persons. To be eligible, a potential recipient must be:

* 18 to 64 years of age;
* have a monthly income less than the guaranteed level and assets not exceeding $2,500 for a single person and not exceeding $5,000 for a person with dependents; and
* qualify as handicapped under the provisions of the GAIN Act and Regulations.

D. GAIN for Seniors Supplement

GAIN for Seniors Supplement is an income supplement paid automatically to seniors whose monthly income from all sources is less than the provincial minimum guaranteed level of $669.90 for a single person, and 1,122.70 for a couple, where both are eligible (1985 levels). The GAIN supplement is provided to persons who receive a full or partial OAS/GIS or Spouses Allowance. In March 1985 there were 46,967 people receiving this supplement.

E. Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER)

SAFER provides direct cash assistance to senior citizen renters to help pay the rent. Monthly SAFER benefits are based on the applicants income and the amount of rent paid. SAFER benefits equal 75 per cent of the amount by which rent exceeds 30 per cent of the applicants total income. The maximum rent level in the SAFER formula, as of April 1, 1985, is $330 per month for singles and $365 for couples. If more than this is paid for rent, the amount in excess is totally the responsibility of the recipient.

SAFER is available to persons 65 years of age or older receiving Old Age Security (OAS), living in rental accommodation and paying more than 30 per cent of their income towards rent (up to the $330 or $365 rent levels), who have resided in B.C. for two years prior to applying. The total number of SAFER recipients on March 31, 1985 was 9,962.

4.4. FEDERAL PROGRAMS

A. Family Allowances

Family Allowance is paid to the parent (usually the mother) who is a resident of Canada (a permanent resident under the Immigration Act). The basic 1987 Federal rate is $31.93 per child.

B. Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit is administered through the Income Tax system. In 1986, a maximum child tax credit of $454.00 per child could be claimed up to a maximum annual net income of $23,500.00. Over this maximum the tax credit is reduced by five cents of every $1.00 of additional net income. SPARC notes that whether or not the child tax credit should be included in determining the overall adequacy of GAIN income assistance is not clearcut. The child tax credit, claimable at the end of the fiscal year and paid as a lump sum, is determined by earnings in that year. Persons newly dependent on GAIN who were employed previously may, therefore, not be entitled to this credit. Also, since 54% of income assistance recipients are in receipt of GAIN for less than 3 months, their period of income assistance dependency could easily occur when it is too late to take advantage of whatever credit was received. Finally, it is unrealistic to expect even the most prudent long-term GAIN recipient to be able to prorate a one-time credit when there are always so many pressing needs of a non-subsistence nature.

C. Old Age Security (OAS)

The full OAS pension is available to anyone who has resided in Canada for a total of 40 years after age 18. Partial payment is available for persons 65 years and older who have lived in Canada a minimum of 10 years, and is calculated at 1/40 of the full pension for each year of residence in Canada after 18 years of age.

OAS pensioners with on income or only a limited amount of income apart from OAS may receive Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). As of July 1986, the maximum OAS monthly payment was $291.51; the GIS for a single person was $346.45; and the GIS for a married couple, both pensioners was $225.63 each.

D. Unemployment Insurance

To be eligible for UIC the recipient must have worked for 15 hours per week, or have earned at least $99.99 a week. As well, the recipient must have worked in insurable employment for at least 10 to 14 weeks in the qualifying period. All persons receiving UIC must be able to work and be looking for work. The maximum claim period is 50 weeks.

UIC benefits are calculated at 60% of insurable earnings up to a maximum of $297 per week or $1,277 per month. Data for November 1986 shows that in B.C. the average weekly benefit was $206 ($886 per month). Males averaged $231 per week and females $171 per week. In 1981, an average of 90,000 people in B.C. were receiving unemployment payments. In 1984, 1985 and 1986 the average was about 200,000 people. The unemployment rate in British Columbia has increased from about 7% in 1981 to about 13% in 1986.

E. Sales Tax Credit

A refundable sales tax credit of $50 per adult and $25 per child was introduced by the Federal Government in the 1986 budget for persons earning up to a maximum $15,000 annual net income.

Acknowledgement:

written by Kris Olds, Lou Pelletier and
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5. HOUSING POLICY AND PROGRAMS AND THE HOMELESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

"Homelessness in our society is, at root, an economic problem. The structure of our economy sets up a conflict between the needs of low-income people for housing and the profit requirements of private enterprise. It is more profitable to build or rent housing for those with higher incomes, leaving the provision of affordable housing to public and voluntary sector developers. The public sector has failed to produce enough permanent housing to meet the needs of low-income people."

"Our experience suggests that men or women who have come to be homeless are most likely to be able to improve their situation in ways they choose if they are able to live in a "Supportive Community." By supportive community we mean a long term residence that is small enough to encourage mutual support among the residents and has staff that are enablers of the residents' goals."

Single Displaced Persons' Project, Toronto
The Case for Long-Term, Supportive Housing, 1983

5.1. HOUSING NEED IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

There is little debate over the fact that many thousands of British Columbians cannot obtain adequate housing appropriate to their needs at an affordable price.

The B.C. Government's own "Inquiry into Social Housing" in 1986, using a very conservative definition of housing need, found that:

* Between 1981 and 1984, housing need has increased in B.C. There has also been a significant increase in the size of the gap between the cost of adequate housing and the household income of individuals and families already in need.

* According to the best available estimates of core house need, 86,000 B.C. renters and 81,000 B.C. homeowners were in core housing need. This represents a total of 167,000 or 16.3% of B.C. households. Our estimate places the number of households closer to 250,000 (about 25% of all B.C. households).

* Certain household types are more likely to be in need:

  -- older singles;
  -- elderly households;
  -- non-elderly single-family parents;
  -- the disabled.

* Many low-income households in need are paying more than 50% of income on rent.

Yet provincial spending on housing programs has decreased in B.C. over the past decade and the provincial government has also engaged in a political attack on the very small and poorly funded federal social housing programs. The federal non-profit and co-op housing programs are the only source of affordable new housing starts in B.C. In 1985, however, the Deputy Minister of housing, Bob Flitton, formerly a president of the Canadian Home Builders Association, told the Vancouver Province that "We would like to see the word non-profit eliminated" from B.C.'s housing system. [1]

The problem of affordable housing supply becomes more critical each year. More British Columbian's live in poverty today than in 1980, yet rents keep going up, vacancy rates remain very low, few new rental units are being built and social housing starts are lower today than in the recent past.

Statistics Canada reports that in 1984 15.1% of B.C.'s 1.1 million households had an income under $10,000. Another 12.1% of households had incomes between $10,000 and $15,000. [2] This means that 300,000 households in the province had incomes under $15,000 in 1984. How can these households afford good quality housing appropriate to the size and needs of their

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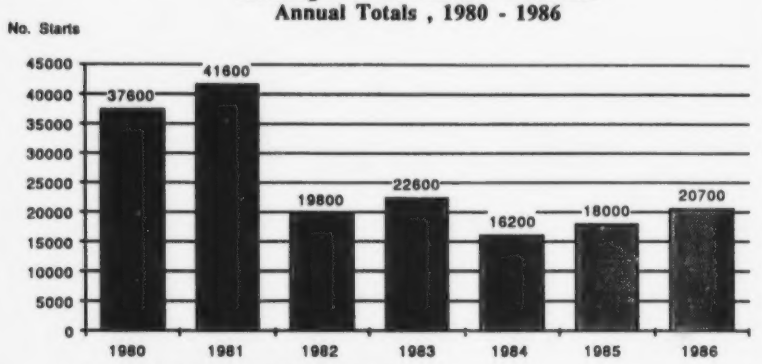
1. The Vancouver Province, July 28, 1985.

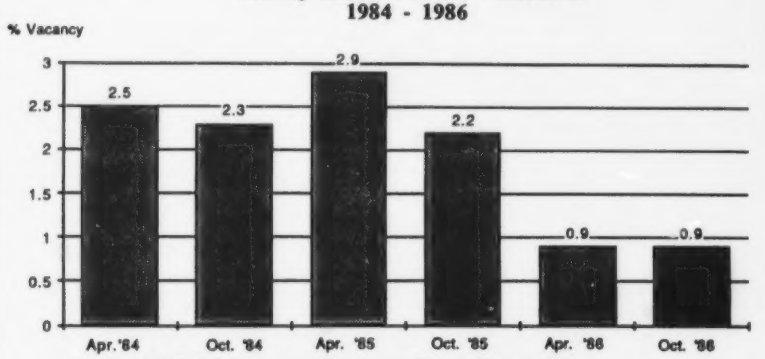
2. Statistics Canada (1986) Household Facilities by Income and Other Characteristics, Ottawa, pp. 48-49.

Housing Starts in British Columbia
Annual Totals , 1980 - 1986



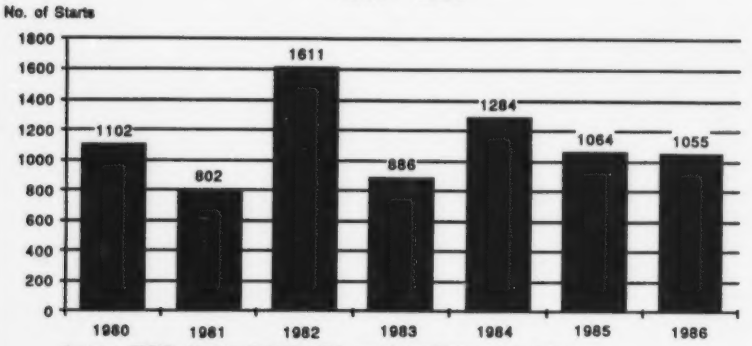
Source : CMHC, Canadian Housing Statistics

Vacancy Rates in Metro Vancouver
1984 - 1986



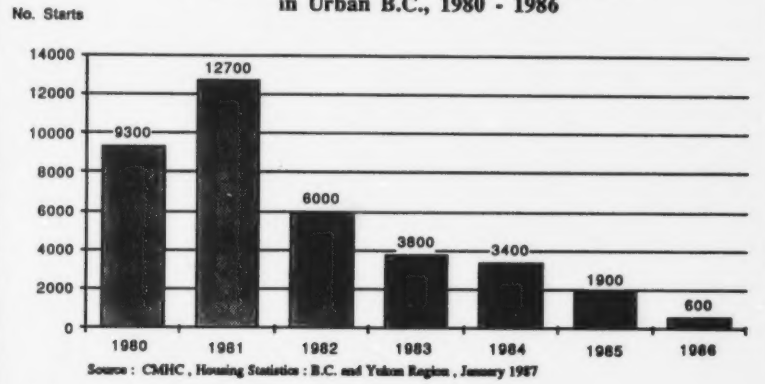
Source : CMHC, B.C. Vacancy and Rent Survey Report , October 1986

Co-op Housing Starts in Urban B.C.,
1980 - 1986



Source : CMHC , Housing Statistics: B.C. and Yukon Region , Jan. 1987

Private and Non-Profit Rental Housing Starts
in Urban B.C., 1980 - 1986



Source : CMHC , Housing Statistics : B.C. and Yukon Region , January 1987

families? In the metro Vancouver area, for example, the average rent for a one bedroom apartment was $406 in 1984. This requires an income of at least $19,500 in order to pay no more than 25% of income on rent. The average rent on a two bedroom apartment in 1984 ($529) requires an income of $25,400. About 500,000 B.C. households (40% of the 1.1 million households in the province) had incomes below $25,000 in 1984.

Housing supply is also a problem in B.C. Housing starts have fallen from 41,600 in 1981 to 20,700 last year. Only 16,200 new units were built in 1984. New private sector and non-profit rental starts have also decreased, from 12,700 in 1981 to 600 units in 1986. [3] Social housing starts have fallen from about 5,200 in 1980 to about 2,500 in the past few years. All of this helps explain why Vacancy rates in 1986 were under 1% in the metro Vancouver area and why there is such a large demand for the often substandard illegal suites in the Vancouver area.

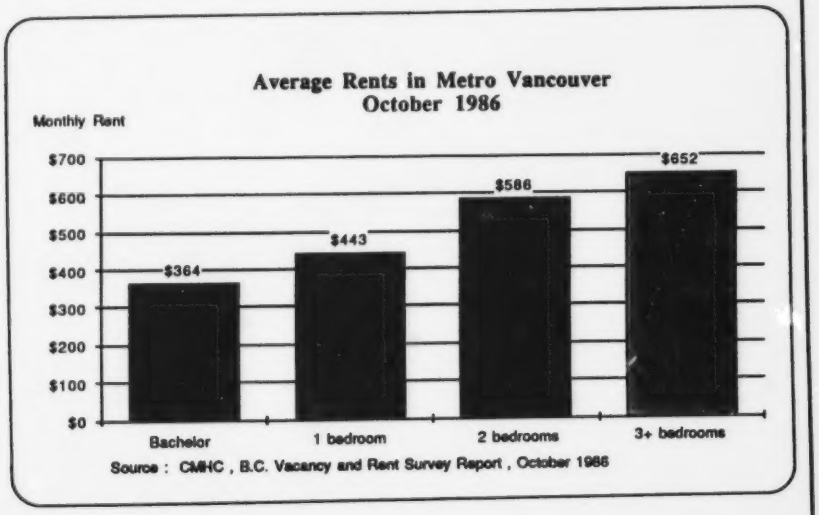
5.2. GOVERNMENT HOUSING INITIATIVES AIMED AT HOMELESSNESS

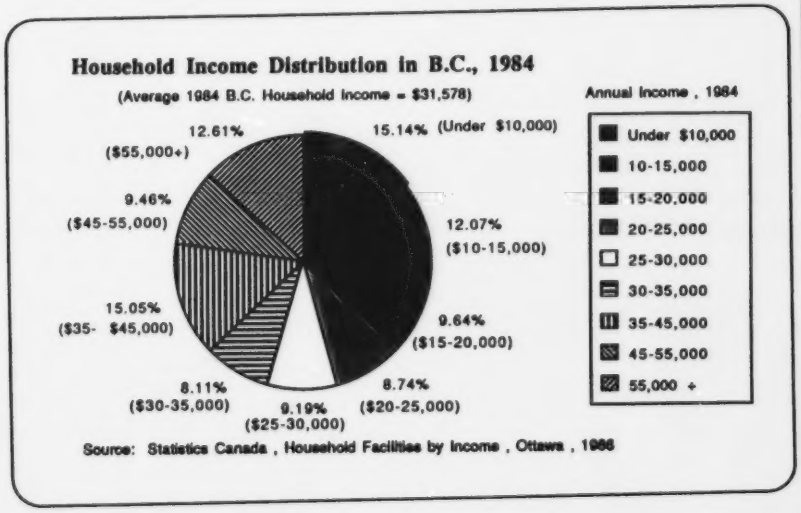
Neither the federal or provincial government has an established program directly aimed at alleviating homelessness. Some programs indirectly assist households who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. In general, however, a person who is homeless and drifting from temporary shelter to temporary shelter is cut off from the networks which eventually lead to obtaining a good quality social housing unit.

The social housing policies and programs of government are aimed at producing residential buildings and generally lack the flexibility to be of use to organizations who seek to help provide shelter to people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. There is little co-ordination between housing policy and social policy.

This paper provides an introduction to the range of housing programs offered by the provincial and federal governments in British Columbia. The objective is to provide a useful summary of recent housing policy and programs, helping make sense of the broad range of options available so as to permit a more informed discussion of new options. Home ownership programs are not covered because they do not have a direct connection to homeless or near homeless people.

3. CMHC, B.C. and Yukon Regional Office, Housing Statistics, January, 1987.





5.3. B.C. GOVERNMENT HOUSING POLICY, 1945 TO THE PRESENT

There have been four distinct periods in the evolution of housing policy in British Columbia.

1945 to 1949. There was no provincial or federal social housing activity in B.C. during the years following WW II. The province considered the financing housing programs a federal responsibility. The federal government did not finance social housing because housing it was considered by federal officials to be a provincial responsibility.

1949 to 1972. The province continued to view housing supply as a sole function of the private market. In the case of lower income households, where the market could not provide housing, the province considered it a federal government problem. When the provincial government did eventually assume a small role in the provision of social housing, it did so reluctantly and with most of the funding coming from the federal government. The result was a cautious expansion of the public housing stock. In contrast, the provincial government actively promoted the production of housing for senior citizens, whose needs were seen as "legitimate." Unlike other categories of the poor, provincial policy has considered the elderly among the "worthy poor."

1972 to 1976. In 1972, the New Democratic Party (NDP) was elected. The NDP viewed good quality, affordable housing as a right of all British Columbians. "For the first time the provincial government followed an explicitly direct interventionist strategy in the housing market, with the goal of producing as much housing as quickly as possible." [4] During this period, the social housing stock of the province was doubled in an attempt to meet the serious need for affordable housing.

1976 to the Present. Most of the rental housing programs initiated by the NDP were abolished when the Social Credit government came to power in December 1975. Eligibility for government housing assistance also became much more restrictive in 1976:

> "The eligible groups include only the elderly, the chronically ill, the handicapped and the very poor. The working poor, those employable but unable to find work, and those with moderate or low income but unable to find suitable housing are not included in their [the government's] definition of needy, and therefore, are expected to fend for themselves in the housing market. [5]

Over the years, the eligibility criteria for housing assistance has become even more restrictive.

5.4. CURRENT FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

In 1986, the federal and provincial governments signed a new operating agreement governing the design, implementation and administration of housing programs. The agreement transfers to the province the role of delivering most programs. In addition, social mix in public and non-profit housing has been eliminated. Only households which would have to pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent qualify for the housing units financed by the joint federal/provincial social housing programs under the new agreement.

The Rent Supplement Program. The Rent Supplement Program provides subsidies which allow lower income households to live in private market rental units. First, the number of units which will be subsidized under the program for a given year is determined. Second, landlords are invited to submit applications to participate in the program. Units are then leased from successful applicants on a five year basis. Tenants pay a maximum of 30 percent of their income for rent. The landlords receive a subsidy equal to the difference between this amount and market rents.

It is important to distinguish between a rent supplement, as described above, and a shelter allowance. A rent supplement is a rent subsidy which is tied to a specific housing unit. The government leases a certain number of market rental units for the rent supplement program. If a household living in a rent supplement unit wishes to move to a new location, it will lose the rent subsidy if there is no available rent supplement unit in the new location. In contrast, a shelter allowance provides a rent subsidy directly to the household, not the landlord. With a shelter allowance a household is free to move into any unit they wish, though government does establish an upper rent level.

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4. B.J. Grieve (1985) "Continuity and Change: Provincial Housing Policy in British Columbia 1945-1985," masters thesis, School of Community & Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, p. 59.

5. Grieve (1985), p. 102.

The Non-Profit Rental Housing Program. Under the Non-Profit Rental Housing Program, the government assists non-profit societies in the construction and management of affordable housing. Indian band councils and tribal councils can also apply to participate in the program as non-profit societies. The government agrees to guarantee a mortgage for the non-profit society which then enables it to obtain a mortgage in the private mortgage market. Tenants are charged a maximum rent of 30 percent of their income. To offset the losses that result from this rent limit, the non-profit society is given a subsidy equal to the difference between operating costs and rent revenues. Up to ten percent of the units are allocated for the disabled.

The Special Purpose Program. The Special Purpose Program creates affordable units for households needing some type of care (e.g. extended care units, half-way house units for battered women, etc.). The number of special purpose units built each year is equal to ten percent of the annual number of units allocated to the Non-Profit Housing Program and the Rent Supplement Program. Special purpose units are constructed and managed by non-profit societies. Operating costs incurred to provide care for residents are paid for by the appropriate ministry. If needed, rent supplements are provided through the program to insure unit affordability.

5.5. PROVINCIAL HOUSING PROGRAMS

The Shelter Assistance for Elderly Renters Program (SAFER). Introduced in 1977, SAFER is a shelter allowance for seniors. It is used in major urban centers. The province undertakes the construction of subsidized seniors housing in smaller communities where the rental stock is inadequate. The program is only available to those seniors who pay more than 30 percent of their income for rental housing. Households participating in the program, however, can still pay more than 30 percent of their income for rent because the province establishes rent limits which often do not reflect the real rent levels seniors have to pay.

The Home Conversion Loan Program. The Home Conversion Loan Program was introduced in 1974. It offers home owners and owners of commercial and industrial property low interest loans for the creation of new rental accommodation in existing buildings. Between 1974 and March 31, 1985, only 815 units were built under the program. [6]

6. British Columbia, Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing, Annual Report 1984-85, p. 17.

5.6. FEDERAL HOUSING PROGRAMS OPERATING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

The Co-operative Housing Program. This program is designed to assist co-operative housing associations in the construction of co-op housing projects. Under this program, three types of financial assistance are provided:

1) an "index-linked mortgage," a new type of mortgage which has the potential to reduce financing costs under certain economic conditions;

2) a subsidy to bring economic rents, the rents needed to cover operating costs, down to the level of market rents; and

3) rent subsidies under the federal-provincial Rent Supplement Program for lower income households who cannot afford the economic rents.

Thirty percent of the units in housing co-operatives are allocated to lower income households under the Rent Supplement Program. There is no means test for households who wish to become members of a co-operative.

The Rural and Native Housing Program. The Rural and Native Housing Program was initiated in 1974. Authority for the program comes from Sections 34.1, 34.121, 34.15, 36(g), 37.1 and 55 of the National Housing Act (NHA).

Sections 34.15 and 55 are the enabling legislation for the home ownership and rental housing component of the program in British Columbia. Under Section 55 low-income natives and non-natives of rural areas, and communities and municipalities of less than 2,500, are eligible for government financing of the construction or acquisition and renovation costs of owner occupied or rental housing. Upon occupation, the client pays a maximum of 25 percent of his/her income on rent or mortgage payments. Section 34.15 is similar to Section 55 with one exception; while existing housing can still be purchased, renovations are not financed under Section 34.15. At present, ownership, lease purchase and rental housing can be created under the program. In British Columbia, however, the rental component of the program has never been used.

The renovation component of the program consists of a loan to upgrade the house to meet minimum health and safety standards and to ensure its livability for at least 15 years. A portion of the loan is forgiven. The emergency repair component of the Rural and Native Housing Program provides grants for necessary health and safety repairs.

The Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). The RRAP program was initiated in 1973 (Section 34.1 and 34.14 of the NHA). Originally, the program was available only in certain urban areas; however, in 1974, the program was extended into rural areas as part of the Rural and Native Housing Program. Under RRAP loans are made available to home owners, landlords, disabled individuals and non-profit groups for the repair or alteration of housing units. It is possible for part of the loan to be forgiven.

Acknowledgement:

written by Marvin Kamenz and David Hulchanski,
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BACKGROUND PAPER # 5

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 15-16, 1987 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA

BACKGROUND
PAPER # 5

HOUSING POLICY AND PROGRAMS AND THE HOMELESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

IYSH·1987

BACKGROUND PAPER # 6

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

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BACKGROUND PAPER # 6

A SURVEY OF TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR THE HOMELESS AND SPECIAL NEEDS IN VANCOUVER

IYSH·1987

6. A SURVEY OF TEMPORARY SHELTERS FOR THE HOMELESS AND SPECIAL NEEDS IN VANCOUVER

"Housing is more than a physical setting to each of us. It is a home, with all of the connotations of that word: a place of safety, of mutual support, of privacy, and a place where an individual has both control over the environment, as well as its expectations or demands."

Paul Curling,
U.S. National Institute of Mental Health

"The most obvious element of homelessness is the lack of housing; but just as "home" is more than physical shelter, "homelessness" includes a lack of this base for the rest of life's activities. "Home" is associated with personal identity, family, relationships, a role in the community, privacy and security, and the possession of personal property. Homelessness or the lack of a home affects all these areas of an individual's life."

Single Displaced Person's Project, Toronto
The Case for Long-Term Supportive, Housing, 1983

In the 1980's there are increasing numbers of people relying on emergency shelters for sustained periods. The new homeless are not a homogeneous group. The traditional stereotype of the indigent vagrant who has opted out of society and into a bottle is a misleading caricature which can no longer be accepted.

This paper presents the information gathered in a survey of various agencies providing emergency and special needs shelter in the metropolitan Vancouver area. The goal of the survey, conducted by personal interviews and telephone, is to provide an overview of the type and range of shelters, the type of need being served, and an initial identification of gaps in the network of emergency shelters in the Lower Mainland. This provides some insights into the nature of homelessness in urban British Columbia as well as an introduction to a range of important social agencies most people know very little about.

Not all relevant agencies were surveyed, though the aim was to identify and survey those most closely associated with providing shelter to potentially homeless people. Twenty-nine agencies were surveyed between November 1986 and February 1987. These agencies are grouped into five broad categories: general (5), males only (4), women only (4), battered women (11), and ex-psychiatric, mental disabilities and long term shelter (5). These are not perfectly exclusive categories. Some shelters can fall into more than one category.

The series of tables which outline the findings of the survey provide information for each agency under seventeen headings: mandate, services offered, restrictions, maximum stay, average stay, hours of operation, cost to client, number of beds, occupancy rate, number turned away, client type, client's source of income, reason for seeking accommodation, agencies referred to, agencies referred from, increase in demand in 1986, and source of funding.

As an introduction to these tables, the following provides: (1) a brief summary of the survey findings; (2) observations drawn from the survey which do not appear on the series of tables; and (3) a discussion of the gaps in the range of shelter options available in the Vancouver area.

6.1. SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY

The following is a short summary of the survey's findings.

A. Maximum Stay

For most shelters there is no pre-determined maximum length of stay. Individual circumstances determine the length of stay in most cases. The shelters for battered women do generally have prescribed maximum limits. Eight of the shelters have a limit of 30 days, one has a limit of 14 days, one has a limit of sixty days, and one has no limit. Even in these cases, however, individual circumstances would ultimately determine the length of stay.

B. **Average Stay**

The average stay depends on the type of shelter. Shelters offering emergency accommodation have stays averaging a few days to a couple of weeks. The special needs and transition houses generally offer long-term support of up to one to two years.

C. **Cost to Client**

Most shelters do not charge the client for emergency accommodation or when the client is referred by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing. Where there is a charge it is in the $10 to $15 per night range. The longer term shelters generally charge $100 to $140 per month.

D. **Number of Beds**

In total, there are 1,460 beds provided by the twenty nine agencies surveyed. The distribution of the beds between the five categories is as follows:

General	355	beds
Males only	450	
Women only	256	
Battered women	112	
Ex-psychiatric, etc.	287	
	1,460	beds

A "bed" indicates a broad range in the type of accommodation offered: some are beds in dormitories, others are in separate bedrooms, and some are in separate suites.

E. **Occupancy Rate**

On average, the occupancy rate of the shelters surveyed was between 75 and 100 percent. The highest occupancy rates, 90 to 100 percent, were in the following categories: women only, battered women, ex-psychiatric, mentally disabled and long-term shelter.

F. **Number Turned Away**

The agencies facing the highest demand and shortest supply are those providing services to battered women, ex-psychiatric, mentally disabled and long-term shelter. Though exact figures are not available for all of the agencies, several of the agencies serving battered women turned away 15 to 71 people per month. Nova House maintains an exact count, reporting that 114 women and 179 children were turned away in 1985.

G. **Change in Demand in 1986**

Sixteen agencies reported an increase in the demand for their services in 1986 compared to 1985. Six agencies reported no increase in demand and six did not know.

6.2. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS BASED ON THE SURVEY

Not all information gathered in the survey can be summarized on the attached tables. The following observations are drawn from the interviews.

* The traditional homeless (single men) seem to be served the best in terms of emergency shelter. In contrast, it is the new homeless (families, youth, women) who face the most severe problems in finding emergency shelter.

* There is a need for a broader range of shelter types in order to meet the diverse needs of the new homeless.

* Emergency Services of the Ministry of Social Services and Housing reports that the temporary shelters with the most pressure on them are Lookout, Owl House and Powell Place. These shelters serve homeless people with special needs and problems.

* The social welfare system often maintains people in a cycle of poverty. The rates (particulary the shelter component) are so deficient that people cannot participate in a normal fashion in society. Many people drift in and out of temporary shelters rather than achieving a secure and stable life style and living arrangement.

* The system of referrals through Emergency Services of the Ministry of Social Services and Housing appears to be quite effective. There does appear to be a problem, however, with respect to people knowing about the services and how to access them.

* In terms of the Lower Mainland's housing stock in general, more boarding houses and apartment style units are needed for the hard to house homeless (people who require assistance due to a lack of social skills as defined by mainstream society).

* There are a considerable number of people who exist in precarious housing conditions because of their exclusion from protection under the Residential Tenancy Act. This includes those individuals who live in lodging houses and residential hotels.

* There is a need for emergency shelter for women who are not physically abused, but have no money and no place to stay. At present, such women are often placed in men's shelters which adds to their insecurity.

* A major problem for battered women is finding permanent accommodation. If they derive their income from the social welfare system, they receive a shelter component in GAIN which is insufficient. This problem, particulary with respect to single women, often drives them back home to abusive situations.

* As well as permanent housing, there is a need for more support groups for women once they leave the transition house.

* Concern was expressed by some shelter staff that more counselling should be provided along with accommodation services.

* Staff of some of the agencies recommended that new shelters should be staffed by trained social service counsellors. This could help decentralize the services provided by the Ministry of Social Services and Housing.

* Several agencies recommended that welfare cheques should be distributed twice monthly rather than once a month. In this way individuals who are unable to budget their meager resources successfully, will be less vulnerable to crises. Furthermore, welfare cheques should be directly deposited to the recipient's bank account upon his or her request.

* There is a need for more employment skill upgrading programs.

6.3. SERIOUS GAPS IN THE RANGE OF TEMPORARY AND SPECIAL NEEDS SHELTER OPTIONS IN THE VANCOUVER AREA

Looking at the survey results as a whole, it is clear that there are some serious gaps in the system of special shelters in metropolitan Vancouver.

Young men and women have very few emergency shelter options. Many of the shelters have a minimum age limit of 18 or 19 years. Older teenagers are left without adequate shelter resources which address their special needs and circumstances. This group can easily fall between special facilities for children and facilities designed for adults.

People with more than one "presenting problem" are considered difficult to house. They often have a substance abuse problem coupled with another kind of physical or mental handicap. There are few emergency shelters which provide beds to this population, and it is difficult for them to find permanent housing with an appropriate supportive environment.

Women ex-psychiatric patients have few options for short term or emergency housing. Most of the places which will accept them shelter a majority of men.

Most of the shelters for battered women do not accept women with psychiatric problems. This is an understandable. However, if a women is fleeing a battering situation and she has a psychiatric problem, there are few if any appropriate shelter options which can accommodate her needs. The closest options addressing this need also house men. This can be a frightening situation for a women to find herself in, further compounding her problems.

There is a very real need for more support for women leaving abusive situations. Transition houses and shelters for battered women are currently turning women and children away. This is in part because women

have a tremendous difficulty in securing appropriate housing for themselves and their families. Their stays at transition houses and shelters for battered women are extended because of their inability to find housing and to pay the cost of that housing.

Almost all of the people who seek emergency shelter are on some form of income assistance. Their inability to find housing on the inadequate amounts provided by the shelter component of income assistance points to the need to not only increase the shelter component but to increase the supply of affordable housing. Poor people do not generate "market demand." The private market cannot respond to social need in the housing sector. The inadequate shelter component of income assistance programs combined with the failure to maintain an adequate social housing supply program are significant causes of increased homelessness in the 1980's in a country as wealthy as Canada.

The staff of emergency shelters point out that temporary shelters are sought out and the length of the stay is long primarily because there is a shortage of other appropriate housing options. Appropriate longer term housing options are either not available, not affordable or lack the support necessary for the needs of people seeking assistance. There are few long-term housing options which address themselves to the needs of people in crisis, people with special emotional or physical needs, or people in transition, who are making difficult changes in their lives.

Most of the people who use temporary shelters have difficulties other than monetary in their lives: they are leaving an abusive domestic situation, or have a history of psychiatric illness, or need to have support in overcoming substance abuse, or cannot live independently, or are ex-offenders, and so on. The problem, therefore, is not simply one of poverty. There is a need for housing that provides a supportive environment, which enhances the abilities of these people to have a secure "home" as a base for making real choices in their lives. This support can be in the context of developing a community within the housing provided, such as the Third House Project sponsored by the Homes First Society in Toronto.

The agencies providing emergency shelter need to have a formal relationship developed with a comprehensive, supportive, permanent housing system. The existing shelters, for the most part, provide only temporary solutions to what is a permanent need for those seeking housing support--the need for a real home. A more developed network of supportive housing which provides permanent homes must be developed if we are to address the needs identified in this survey.

Acknowledgement:

Introduction written by: David Hulchanski, Bernadette Kowey, Kristopher Olds and Lou Pelletier.

Survey conducted by: Caitlin Elkington, Marvin Kamenz, Ross McMillan, Aileen Murphy, Kristopher Olds, Lou Pelletier and Debbie Seto.

School of Community and Regional Planning, U.B.C.

HOMELESSNESS IN METROPOLITAN VANCOUVER: A SURVEY OF SHELTER OPTIONS FOR THE HOMELESS 1986 / 1987

CATEGORY Name & Address	MANDATE	SERVICES OFFERED	RESTRICTIONS
I. GENERAL			
Lookout 346 Alexander St. Vancouver	housing & shelter support for hard to house on emerg. basis	accommodation, food, laundry, counselling, liason with comm. res.	serves phychiatric patients, substance abusers, over 18 years
Triage 906 Main St. Vancouver	to service the homeless, anyone in crisis	accommodation, food	over 19 years of age
Central Residence 42 E. Cordova St. Vacouver	provide home for difficult to house individuals	permanent accomm., cooking facilities	after 10 pm no visitors, no children
Alexander Residence 58 Alexander St. Vancouver	provide housing for people 45 yrs & over on welfare or limited inc.	permanent accomm., cooking facilities	no children
Y.M.C.A. 955 Burrard Vancouver	provide low cost residence for men & women. Anyone destitute	sleeping accomm., full use of Y.M.C.A. facilities	no drunks or people on drugs

Compiled from interviews conducted between November 1986 and February 1987,
by C. Elkington, M. Kamenz, R. McMillan, A. Murphy, K. Olds, L. Pelletier, D. Seto.
School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia.

CATEGORY Name & Address	MAXIMUM STAY	AVERAGE STAY	HOURS OF OPERATION	COST TO CLIENT	NUMBER OF BEDS
I. GENERAL					
Lookout 346 Alexander St. Vancouver	determined by individual situation	6 days	24 hours	n/c for 40 of 42 beds, $16 for 2 beds	42 beds
Triage 906 Main St. Vancouver	1 year	2 months	24 hours	n/c	28 beds
Central Residence 42 E. Cordova St. Vacouver	no limit	n/a	n/applic	$95 - $140 per month	136 single housekeeping units
Alexander Residence 58 Alexander St. Vancouver	no limit	5 years	n/applic	$115/month	29 single housekeeping units
Y.M.C.A. 955 Burrard Vancouver	determined by individual situation, not premanent	n/a	24 hours	$24/day	120 rooms

List of Abbreviations: accomm. = accommodation; n/a = not available; n/c = no charge
Last Revision: 5 April 1987

CATEGORY Name & Address	OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER TURNED AWAY	CLIENT TYPE	CLIENTS' SOURCE OF INCOME
I. GENERAL				
Lookout 346 Alexander St. Vancouver	70-100% occup.	n/a	3 to 1 men, mostly individuals	G.A.I.N., H.P.I.A.
Triage 906 Main St. Vancouver	50-70% occup.	never, refer elsewhere	2 out of 3 men	G.A.I.N., H.P.I.A.
Central Residence 42 E. Cordova St. Vacouver	95% occup.	n/a	people who are difficult to house	G.A.I.N, H.P.I.A., Vet. Pensions, Old age pension
Alexander Residence 59 Alexander St. Vancouver	100% occup.	n/a refer elsewhere	substance abusers, difficult to house	G.A.I.N, H.P.I.A., Canada pension
Y.M.C.A. 955 Burrard Vancouver	n/a	n/a	n/a	private

CATEGORY Name & Address	REASON FOR SEEKING ACCOMMODATION	AGENCIES REFERRED TO	AGENCIES REFERRED FROM	INCREASE IN DEMAND IN 1986	SOURCE OF FUNDING
I. GENERAL					
Lookout 346 Alexander St. Vancouver	shortage of approp. long term housing, unable to live independently	n/a	M.S.S.H.	Yes	M.S.S.H.
Triage 906 Main St. Vancouver	shortage of approp. long term housing, unable to live independently	Lookout, Chatholic Charity, Union Gospel Mission	M.S.S.H.	Not sure	M.S.S.H.
Central Residence 42 E. Cordova St. Vacouver	shortage of approp. long term housing, unable to live independently	n/A	Info Services of Vancouver United Way	About the same	C.M.H.C., Staffed by City of Van.
Alexander Residence 58 Alexander St. Vancouver	shortage of approp. long term housing, unable to live independently	Central Resid., Oppenheimer Lodge, Continental Resid.	Long Term Care Program	No	C.M.H.C., Staffed by City of Van.
Y.M.C.A. 955 Burrard Vancouver	people use it as a low cost hotel or stop over	Salvation Army	M.S.S.H. churches City S.S. Dept.	Yes, do to Expo	members, customers, contributions

MALES ONLY, Page 1 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	MANDATE	SERVICES OFFERED	RESTRICTIONS
II. MALES ONLY			
Catholic Charity Men's Hostel 828 Cambie Vancouver	emergency shelter for men of any age	sleeping accomm., food	must be mobile, not wheelchair access., no drunks, subs. abusers
Central City Mission 233 Abbott Vancouver	long-term care for any residents of comm. Long term care hospital	sleeping accomm., food, nursing, doctor care, alcohol rehab. program	men only in need of long term care, no servere psych. probs., no emerg. shelter
Anchorage Salvation Army Service 248 E. 11 Ave. Van.	care & counselling to to those with additions or to ex-offenders	accomm., food, job train., life-skill train., social programs, addiction counsel.	men only, must stay 3 months, no psychiatric patients
Dunsmuir House for Men (Salvation Army) 500 Dunsmuir St. Vancouver, B.C.	provide shelter for men in need	accomm., meals, common room, counselling on demand	Men only, no dringing, or drunkeness on premises

WOMEN ONLY, Page 1 of 4

III. WOMEN ONLY			
Y.W.C.A. 580 Burrard St Vancouver	residential hotel, emerg. shelter for refugees, women or others in crisis	accomm., kitchen facil., counselling, referrals	no single men, will take families, no alcohol or drug abusers
Santa Maria House 2056 W. 7 Ave. Vancouver	serve women who need help	perm., accomm., cooking facilities counselling	women only, 18 years and over, no childern
Powell House 331 Powell St. Vancouver	serve women & their families who are in crisis	accomm., food & cooking, counselling, job place., refer. for perm. accomm.	women only, no psychiatric probs.
Evergreen Surrey Emergency Shelter & Comm. Resource Centre 13468 A 72 Ave. Surrey	temporary accomm. for battered women and their children	accomm., food, counselling, advocacy for battered women	women only

MALES ONLY, Page 2 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	MAXIMUM STAY	AVERAGE STAY	HOURS OF OPERATION	COST TO CLIENT	NUMBER OF BEDS
II. MALES ONLY					
Catholic Charity Men's Hostel 828 Cambie Vancouver	no limit	2-3 days	4-11:30 pm 8:00 am discharge	n/c	80 beds
Central City Mission 233 Abbott Vancouver	no limit	n/a	8 to 5	$15.90/day	117 beds, & 12 - 19 beds for alcohol rehab.
Anchorage Salvation Army Service 248 E. 11 Ave. Van.	no limit as long as progress in made	2 months	8:00 am to 11:00 pm	$12.00/day if possible	43 beds
Dunsmuir House for Men (Salvation Army) 500 Dunsmuir St. Vancouver, B.C.	no limit	n/a	7:30 to 3:30 pm doors close at 11:00 pm	n/a	168 rooms, 30 beds in dorm

WOMEN ONLY, Page 2 of 4

III. WOMEN ONLY					
Y.W.C.A. 580 Burrard St Vancouver	no limit	2-3 nights	24 hours	n/c on referral otherwise $25/night	6 emerg. beds 200 beds through M.S.S.H. referral
Santa Maria House 2056 W. 7 Ave. Vancouver	no limit	n/a	24 hours	$350/month if working	8 private rooms
Powell House 331 Powell St. Vancouver	30 days, but flexible	14-30 days	24 hours	n/c	32 beds
Evergreen Surrey Emergency Shelter & Comm. Resource Centre 13468 A 72 Ave. Surrey	1 month	2 weeks	24 hours	n/c	10 beds

MALES ONLY, Page 3 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER TURNED AWAY	CLIENT TYPE	CLIENTS' SOURCE OF INCOME
II. MALES ONLY				
Catholic Charity Men's Hostel 828 Cambie Vancouver	75% occupancy 7000 men/year 20260 bed nights/yr	n/a	men	G.A.I.N.
Central City Mission 233 Abbott Vancouver	95% occupancy for august	n/a	3/4 men on old age pension. 1/4 single men over 45 years	O.A.P. Vet. Pension G.A.I.N.
Anchorage Salvation Army Service 248 E. 11 Ave. Van.	80% occup.	none	most with substance abuse problems, some ex-offenders	G.A.I.N.
Dunsmuir House for Men (Salvation Army) 500 Dunsmuir St. Vancouver, B.C.	80% occup	Very few	n/a	Employed Pension G.A.I.N.

WOMEN ONLY, Page 3 of 4

III. WOMEN ONLY				
Y.W.C.A. 580 Burrard St Vancouver	Dec. 1986 9 from MSSH 54 refugees	n/a	substance abusers, ex-offenders, ex-psych., elderly	G.A.I.N. other sources
Santa Maria House 2056 W. 7 Ave. Vancouver	100% occup.	5 in two days	women substance abusers, native, abused women	G.A.I.N.
Powell House 331 Powell St. Vancouver	1986 - 5000 bed nights Jan. 26/87: 855 occupancy	variable depending on time of year	women substance abusers	G.A.I.N.
Evergreen Surrey Emergency Shelter & Comm. Resource Centre 13468 A 72 Ave. Surrey	95% occup.	n/a	50% battered women 50% single women transients	G.A.I.N.

MALES ONLY, Page 4 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	REASON FOR SEEKING ACCOMMODATION	AGENCIES REFERRED TO	AGENCIES REFERRED FROM	INCREASE IN DEMAND IN 1986	SOURCE OF FUNDING
II. MALES ONLY					
Catholic Charity Men's Hostel 828 Cambie Vancouver	on welfare, no money	do not refer	M.S.S.H.	n/a	Beds paid for by M.S.S.H., Church contributions
Central City Mission 233 Abbott Vancouver	unable to care for themselves	other long term centres	Long Term Care Officer Acute care hospitals	No	Ministry of Health
Anchorage Salvation Army Service 248 E. 11 Ave. Van.	came to end addiction problem	Dunsmuir House, Kinghaven, Maple Ridge Rehab. Centre	Detox Centre	Don't know	M.S.S.H., Salvation Army Thrift Store
Dunsmuir House for Men (Salvation Army) 500 Dunsmuir St. Vancouver, B.C.	no where to live. Need a quiet, controlled facility with low cost	M.H.H.S. Detox centers	M.S.S.H. & others	Yes	Own organization, beds contracted to MSSH, client fees.

WOMEN ONLY, Page 4 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	REASON FOR SEEKING ACCOMMODATION	AGENCIES REFERRED TO	AGENCIES REFERRED FROM	INCREASE IN DEMAND IN 1986	SOURCE OF FUNDING
III. WOMEN ONLY					
Y.W.C.A. 580 Burrard St Vancouver	people in transition, or using it as a low cost hotel	n/a	M.S.S.H. refugee societies	About the same	private donations, users
Santa Maria House 2056 W. 7 Ave. Vancouver	don't get along at home, no approp. housing	E-Fry Home, Homestead, Salvation Army	Aurora House	Yes	M.S.S.H.
Powell House 331 Powell St. Vancouver	people have some form of crisis in their lives	n/a	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	Yes	M.S.S.H.
Evergreen Surrey Emergency Shelter & Comm. Resource Centre 13468 A 72 Ave. Surrey	physical abuse	other transition houses	M.S.S.H.	Yes	M.S.S.H.

CATEGORY Name & Address	MANDATE	SERVICES OFFERED	RESTRICTIONS
IV. BATTERED WOMEN			BATTERED WOMEN, Page 1 of 4
Cythera Transition House Maple Ridge	temporary accomm. for battered women & their children	accomm., food & cooking, counselling, help find perm. accomm.	no psychiatric, no substance abusers
Munro House Vancouver	second stage transition for battered women & their children	accomm., food, counselling	must have children, no drug, alcohol, or psychiatric prob.
Coquitlam Woman's Transition House Port Coquitlam	battered women and their children	accomm., food/cooking, common room, counsel., find altern. accomm.	no psychiatric, no substance abuse
Ishtar Transition House Langley	battered women and their children	accomm., food/cooking, counselling, find accommodation	no psychiatric, no substance abuse
Kate Booth House Salvation Army Langley	battered women and their children	accommodation food/cooking, counselling	no psychiatric, no substance abuse
Emily Murphy Transition House North Vancouver	battered women and their children & homeless women	accomm., food/cooking, common room, counsel., find altern. accomm.	no drinking, hitting, no psychiatric disturb., no drug abusers
Nova House Richmond Transition House	battered women and their children	accomm., food/cooking, counselling	no psychiatric, no substance abuse
Marguerite Dixon House Lifeline Society Burnaby	battered women and their children	accomm., food/cooking, counselling, refer. to other agencies	no psychiatric, no substance abuse
Safe Choice Program Vancouver	battered women and their children for second stage program	accommodation food/cooking, counselling	screened through transition house, no psych. prob., subs. abusers, no sexually abused
Owl House Emergency Shelter Vancouver	emergency shelter to female-headed families, & other women in crisis	accomm., food/cooking, laudry, couns.,find alternative accomm.	over 18 yrs., eligible for G.A.I.N., no psych. prob., no substance abusers
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women Shelter	emergency & temporary shelter for women and their families	accomm., food/cooking, couns., refer. to other comm. services	no men, must be self supporting & co-operative

CATEGORY Name & Address	MAXIMUM STAY	AVERAGE STAY	HOURS OF OPERATION	COST TO CLIENT	NUMBER OF BEDS
IV. BATTERED WOMEN					BATTERED WOMEN, Page 2 of 4
Cythera Transition House Maple Ridge	30 days	30 days	24 hours	n/c	8 beds
Munro House Vancouver	up to six months	under 6 months	9-6 Mon/Fri on call 24 hours	n/c	6 suites, 4 one bedroom 2 two bedroom
Coquitlam Women's Transition House Port Coquitlam	up to 30 days	20 days	24 hours	n/c	14 beds
Ishtar Transition House Langley	10 days for singles, 30 days for women w/ children	30 days	24 hours	n/c	12 beds
Kate Booth House Salvation Army Langley	14 days	14 days	24 hours	n/c	12 beds
Emily Murphy Transition House North Vancouver	30 days	2-3 weeks or 14-21 days	24 hours	n/c	10 beds
Nova House Richmond Transition House	singles 2 weeks, w/ children 1 month	30 days	24 hours	n/c	10 beds
Marguerite Dixon House Lifeline Society Burnaby	singles 2 weeks, w/ children 1 month	30 days	24 hours	n/c	10 beds
Safe Choice Program Vancouver	30 days	30 days	9 to 5	n/c	10 beds
Owl House Emergency Shelter Vancouver	30 days	7-14 days	24 hours	n/c	12 beds
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women Shelter	no limit	6 weeks	24 hours	n/c or based on income	10 beds

CATEGORY Name & Address	OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER TURNED AWAY	CLIENT TYPE	CLIENTS' SOURCE OF INCOME
IV. BATTERED WOMEN				BATTERED WOMEN, Page 3 of 4
Cythera Transition House Maple Ridge	n/a	Nov. /86 8 families	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N.
Munro House Vancouver	Dec, 86 14 people	n/a	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N.
Coquitlam Women's Transition House Port Coquitlam	n/a	n/a	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N.
Ishtar Transition House Langley	n/a	15-20 people per month	battered women and their children	1/3 G.A.I.N. 1/3 work 1/3 other sources
Kate Booth House Salvation Army Langley	n/a	n/a, but quite a few because full	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N. work other sources
Emily Murphy Transition House North Vancouver	90% occup.	Nov. /86 37 people	battered women and their children	n/a
Nova House Richmond Transition House	n/a	1985 114 women 179 children	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N.
Marguerite Dixon House Lifeline Society Burnaby	n/a	Nov. /86 71 people	battered women and their children	1/2 G.A.I.N. 1/2 other sources
Safe Choice Program Vancouver	90% occup.	n/a	battered women and their children	G.A.I.N.
Owl House Emergency Shelter Vancouver	90% occup.	n/a, but do turn people away	most battered women	G.A.I.N.
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women Shelter	90% occup.	never	batterd women and their children	G.A.I.N. other sources

CATEGORY Name & Address	REASON FOR SEEKING ACCOMMODATION	AGENCIES REFERRED TO	AGENCIES REFERRED FROM	INCREASE IN DEMAND IN 1986	SOURCE OF FUNDING
IV. BATTERED WOMEN				BATTERED WOMEN, Page 4 of 4	
Cythera Transition House Maple Ridge	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	Yes	M.S.S.H.
Munro House Vancouver	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	other transition houses	Don't know	M.S.S.H., private donations
Coquitlam Women's Transition House Port Coquitlam	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	M.S.S.H.	No	M.S.S.H.
Ishtar Transition House Langley	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	other transition house	10% increase	M.S.S.H.
Kate Booth House Salvation Army Langley	living in abusive situation	other transition house, M.S.S.H.	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	n/a	M.S.S.H.
Emily Murphy Transition House North Vancouver	living in abusive situation	other transition house, M.S.S.H.	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	Yes	M.S.S.H., municipality, private donations
Nova House Richmond Transition House	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	Yes	M.S.S.H., United Way, Private Donations
Marguerite Dixon House Lifeline Society Burnaby	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	Yes	M.S.S.H., life line society
Safe Choice Program Vancouver	living in abusive situation	other transition house, M.S.S.H.	M.S.S.H. other transition houses	n/a	M.S.S.H.
Owl House Emergency Shelter Vancouver	living in abusive situation	n/a	M.S.S.H.	Yes, in part due to Expo	M.S.S.H.
Vancouver Rape Relief and Women Shelter	living in abusive situation	other transition houses in the Lower Mainland	other transition houses	Yes	community based funding

EX.PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL DISABILITIES, LONG TERM SHELTER, Page 1 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	MANDATE	SERVICES OFFERED	RESTRICTIONS
V. EX-PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL DISABILITIES, LONG TERM SHELTER			
Coast Foundation Society Vancouver	to provide housing, vocational and social services to ex-psychiatric	perm. accomm., social progr., & crisis intervention boarding homes w/ intensive care	only ex-psych. patients,
Pendleton House Richmond Society For Special People	shelter for mental handicapped in as normative a manner as possible	respite care - accomm., perm., personal care, recreation, food, life-skills train.	no aggressive people
Pioneer House New Westminster	ex-pyschiatric patients boarding home providing long-term care	long-term accomm., food/ cooking, counselling, job place., social recr. progr.	over 18 yrs., must be referred by New West. mental health centre
Mental Patients Association 745 W. 7 Van.	to assist in rehab. & housing of mental patients	long-term accomm., food/ cooking, counselling, job place., social recr. progr.	over 19 yrs, >1 year resident of B.C., selected by those already living there
Progressive Housing Burnaby Assoc. for Housing Emotionally disabled	serving mentally ill people, who need subsidized housing with no supervision	3 indep. group homes, accomm., food/cooking, help find alter. accomm.	over 19 yrs., unable to work, mentally ill, must not require supervision

EX.PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL DISABILITIES, LONG TERM SHELTER, Page 2 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	MAXIMUM STAY	AVERAGE STAY	HOURS OF OPERATION	COST TO CLIENT	NUMBER OF BEDS
V. EX-PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL					
Coast Foundation Society Vancouver	no limit	n/a	Apt. 9-5, boarding home 24 hrs	each client pays accord. to income	128 apt units 60 beds in boarding homes
Pendleton House Richmond Society For Special People	respite 28 days, perm. care no limit	respite 2-7 da long term n/a	24 hours	token amount n/c	5 respite 3 perm.
Pioneer House New Westminster	no limit	1 year	n/a	$15.90/day	30 beds
Mental Patients Association 745 W. 7 Van.	no limit	1 year	n/a	$340/mth if income avail. other from MSSH	46 beds
Progressive Housing Burnaby Assoc. for Housing Emotionally disabled	no limit	2.5 years	24 hours	$143/mth	15 beds

EX.PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL DISABILITIES, LONG TERM SHELTER, Page 3 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	OCCUPANCY RATE	NUMBER TURNED AWAY	CLIENT TYPE	CLIENTS' SOURCE OF INCOME
V. EX-PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL				
Coast Foundation Society Vancouver	100% occupancy 3-4 person turn over per year	100 people on apt. waiting list	ex-psychiatric	G.A.I.N. H.P.I.A. pensions, other
Pendleton House Richmond Society For Special People	n/a for respite permanent 100% occup.	n/a	mentally handicapped	G.A.I.N. H.P.I.A.
Pioneer House New Westminster	100% occupancy	n/a	ex-psychiatric	G.A.I.N. H.P.I.A.
Mental Patients Association 745 W. 7 Van.	Aug. /86 90% occupancy	n/a, but do turn alot away	people w/ psychiatric problems	G.A.I.N. handicapped pension
Progressive Housing Burnaby Assoc. for Housing Emotionally disabled	100% occupancy	10 - 12 on waiting list.	people w/ psychiatric problems	G.A.I.N.

EX.PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL DISABILITIES, LONG TERM SHELTER, Page 4 of 4

CATEGORY Name & Address	REASON FOR SEEKING ACCOMMODATION	AGENCIES REFERRED TO	AGENCIES REFERRED FROM	INCREASE IN DEMAND IN 1986	SOURCE OF FUNDING
V. EX-PSYCHIATRIC, MENTAL					
Coast Foundation Society Vancouver	need prem. housing with approp. services	St. James Society Mental Patients Association	M.S.S.H. & others	Yes	private, M.S.S.H. grant, C.M.H.C.
Pendleton House Richmond Society For Special People	parents need a break, people who need to learn life skills	none	Public health officials M.S.S.H.	Yes	M.S.S.H., C.M.H.C., B.C.Housing Corp.
Pioneer House New Westminster	need to learn life skills	New West. Mental Health Centre	New West Mental Health Centre	Yes	M.S.S.H., clients
Mental Patients Association 745 W. 7 Van.	need to learn life skills	other homes which the mental health agency handles	Mental Health Liason Program	Yes	M.S.S.H., Ministry of Health, clients
Progressive Housing Burnaby Assoc. for Housing Emotionally disabled	mentally ill people, unable to work and need subsidized housing	Provincial boarding Program	Mental Health Centers	No	client rent, B.C. Housing Corp.

Last Revision: 5 April 1987

List of Abbreviations: accomm. = accommodation; n/a = not available

Compiled from interviews conducted between November 1986 and February 1987,
by C. Elkington, M. Kamenz, R. McMillan, A. Murphy, K. Olds, L. Pelletier, D. Seto.
School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia

BACKGROUND PAPER # 7

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A CONFERENCE ON HOMELESSNESS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

MAY 15-16, 1987 THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

VANCOUVER, B.C., CANADA

BACKGROUND PAPER # 7

SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS:

THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SHELTER STRATEGY

IYSH·1987

7. SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS: THE NEED FOR A COMPREHENSIVE SHELTER STRATEGY

"Access to and provision of services alone will not help the homeless. Simply warehousing the poor in old or new buildings will not help either.

"Homelessness in 1987 will require an integrated and concerted attack involving public, private, and co-operative resources, building on the substantial success achieved by individual charitable and non-profit organizations in Canada's major cities."

The Centre for Human Settlements,
University of British Columbia

The homeless are not hopeless, and the problems associated with homelessness can be resolved in Canada. Solutions to the shelter and related neighbourhood problems of the poor and disadvantaged require comprehensive and structured responses if they are to have a long-term impact. Shelter issues cannot be separated from the broader human settlements development issues, and neither set of issues can be separated from those of poverty and economic development.

A comprehensive shelter strategy must encompass related economic, political, socio-cultural and design solutions. The responses must be based on a co-operative commitment by all levels of government, co-ordinated with the initiatives developed by non-governmental organizations and the homeless themselves, and designed to enable individuals and families to begin or to return to participate fully in Canada's prevailing society.

Any lasting solution to homelessness requires a committed partnership combining the resources of the federal/provincial governments with the ability of private market investment, held together by the continued enthusiasm of volunteer and charitable institutions committed to improving local and regional living and housing conditions.

Specifically, resolving homelessness in Canada requires the concerted partnership of six groups:

(a) The homeless themselves, to identify needs, expectations and aspirations;

(b) the volunteer and local charitable organizations with extensive pioneer experience in providing shelter and temporary health and food services for the poor;

(c) private industry providing investment, contracting and building services;

(d) the municipalities and local governments who influence location and availability of land and buildings for housing projects, while being responsible for establishing norms and regulations through local by-laws and ordinances;

(e) the provinces and their agencies who have the Canadian constitutional jurisdiction for housing and social services. The provinces represent a major source of policy initiatives and the critical opportunity for co-ordinating the delivery of health and social services to the homeless in relation to shelter provision and appropriate accommodation; and

(f) the federal government through its taxation power is able to raise and allocate appropriate resources to housing and social service programs including social housing on a national basis.

Government response must be predicated on a systematic process whereby federal funds and local government support is co-ordinated with, and has as its foundation, the development and implementation of provincial public policies which reflect regional differences and jurisdiction. Such an integrated approach requires the provision of appropriate short term, medium range - transitional shelter and permanent housing in appropriate locations at a human scale, in conjunction with the provision of and ready access to locally available social and economic services. Access to and provision of social and economic services involves financial support, social counselling and a process of aided self-help. It requires training and retraining to increase employment opportunities. It requires the rehabilitation of the whole person, able and willing to manage his or her own life and be responsible for his or her own needs and the needs of their respective families.

Access to and provision of services alone will not help the homeless. Simply warehousing the poor in old or new buildings will not help either. Homelessness in 1987 will require an integrated and concerted attack involving public, private, and co-operative resources, building on the substantial success achieved by individual charitable and non-profit organizations in Canada's major cities.

Most efforts to address homelessness and urban poverty are currently in the hands of local organizations, especially volunteer and non-governmental agencies; since the problems occur at the community level, most of the initiatives to ameliorate the conditions have focussed on local strategies to compensate for inadequate shelter and income. They represent the first step toward providing long term solutions to chronic, structural problems. They are in effect project responses to immediate problems. To be truly effective, they need to be aggregated into broadly based programme responses by the level of government which has the power to develop and implement generic policies and the resources to implement selected strategies.

Representative examples from four of the largest urban centres in which the problems of homelessness are clearly manifest, illustrate the type of projects designed to demonstrate the variety of solutions which are currently being tested in Canada.

Acknowledgement:

Background Paper #7 is a reprint of the final section of Shelter or Homes? A Contribution to the Search for Solutions to Homelessness in Canada (1987), by H. Peter Oberlander and Arthur L. Fallick, Centre for Human Settlements, U.B.C.

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

310 Alexander Street: Quality Shelter and Aided Self-help Through Progressive Adaptation.

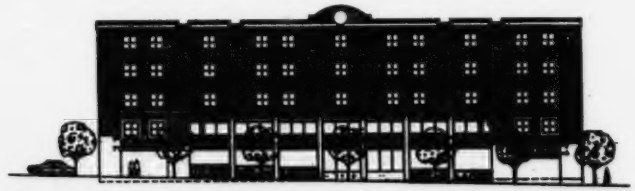
In Vancouver, many of the problems associated with homelessness are concentrated in the older downtown and eastside neighbourhoods, where older single men on welfare and the majority of World War II veterans who have chronic illnesses reside in Skid Row hotels and sleeping rooms when they are not sleeping 'under the stars'. Approximately 80% of the residents of the area receive some form of fixed income assistance or have incomes which are not keeping pace with the increases in the cost of living. Although it is considered by many to be a hard and unforgiving place, there is a strong sense of community in the area, and residents consider the local streets to be an extension of their living rooms. It is a milieu which is both home and a neighbourhood. A number of highly innovative initiatives have been designed for the long term residents of the downtown eastside, providing them with secure, affordable and quality accommodation enabling them to live with dignity in the area of their choice. The projects demonstrate many ingenious and user sensitive architectural and urban design features, which imaginatively overcome or compensate for many of the difficulties which prevail. New and converted buildings have been designed in harmony with existing structures. The obvious efforts to have new projects enhance the sense of community reflects the long term commitments and personal ideals of those who work with the poor and disadvantaged in this area.

A new five storey building containing 134 units for World War II veterans has recently opened for the long-term, hard to house residents of the area to enable them to regain choice and control over their housing, their environment, and ultimately their lives. At its core is a simple but vital concept: it is possible to humanize the life-space of marginalized people through a process of progressive adaptation, by combining physical shelter with aided social self-help and ready access to a range of essential support services. The five floors provide a reasonable upward progression of help and care from full dependence on staff (on the ground floor) to complete independence with private bathroom and kitchen for those who have learned to regain self management and health. 40 units on the first and part of the second floors are designed for residents who require some degree of physical or health assistance. These units (185 square feet net) contain a sink, a bed and basic furniture. The remaining units are designed with larger space and more facilities for those who are able to function with less supervision. These units range from those with a toilet and sink only, to a bath and kitchenette, and ultimately to fully self-contained facilities. Funding for the $4.5 million project comes from three sources. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provides assistance under the Non-Profit Rental Housing Program (approximately $324,000 per annum which is applied to reduce rental charges). Veterans' Affairs Canada has committed $50,000 annually over the next five years to cover additional service staffing costs. The City of Vancouver provided a write-down on the land lease to 75% of market value, thereby retaining public ownership and protecting against land speculation.

A significant aspect of the building's management is the conviction of the

staff that the residents require ready access to a variety of social and personal services all under one roof. The emphasis is on helping them to help themselves. Although there exists a built-in inspection system operated by the residents for the residents, the aim is not to enforce 'rehabilitation', but to facilitate, encourage and support whatever developments or improvements in lifestyle can occur. The attempt is "to put the paths where the people walk" by providing a safe and supportive environment that engenders self-respect.

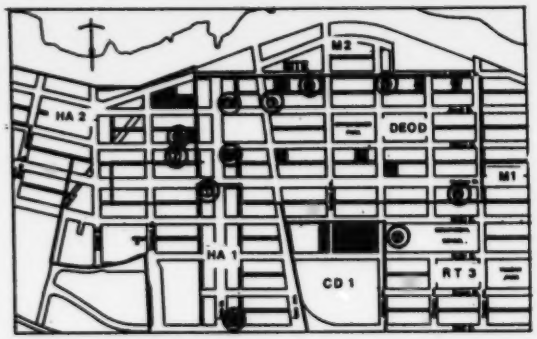
The project exemplifies the stewardship underlying the process whereby experienced public and private organizations can work with the homeless where they choose to congregate, and reflects the importance of having a committed partnership between, in this case, the Federal and Municipal governments co-ordinating efforts with the private sector and voluntary groups. The Veteran's Memorial Housing project literally takes people off the street and provides them with the opportunity to put their lives back together in a supportive, sensitive environment. The building design includes a subsidized low cost public cafeteria for residents and the surrounding community identified as Club 44, reflecting the desire to maintain and strengthen long established community ties. It is intended that when veterans no longer require the units provided, they will become available to non-veteran homeless, and that ultimately, the success of this project approach can be replicated for other homeless and in other regions of Canada.



STREET ELEVATION

310 ALEXANDER STREET
VANCOUVER, B.C.

LANE ELEVATION



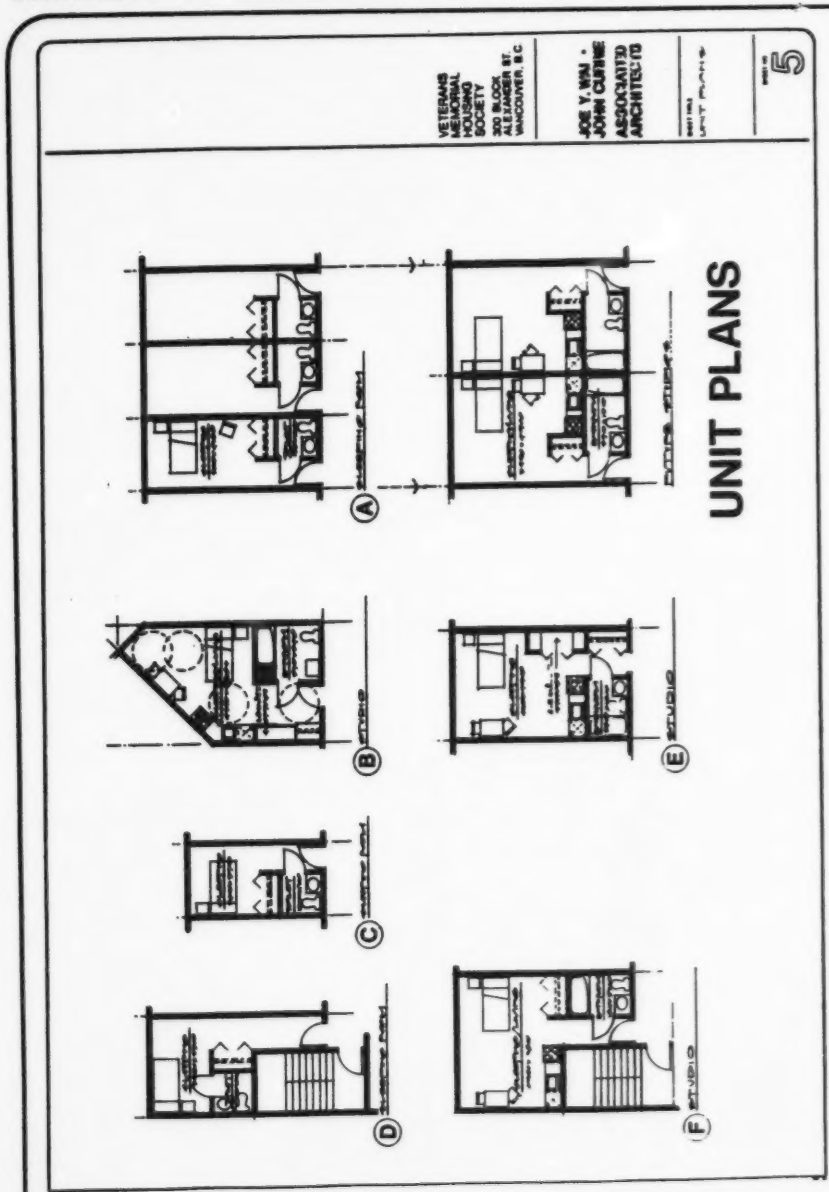
SITE LOCATION MAP

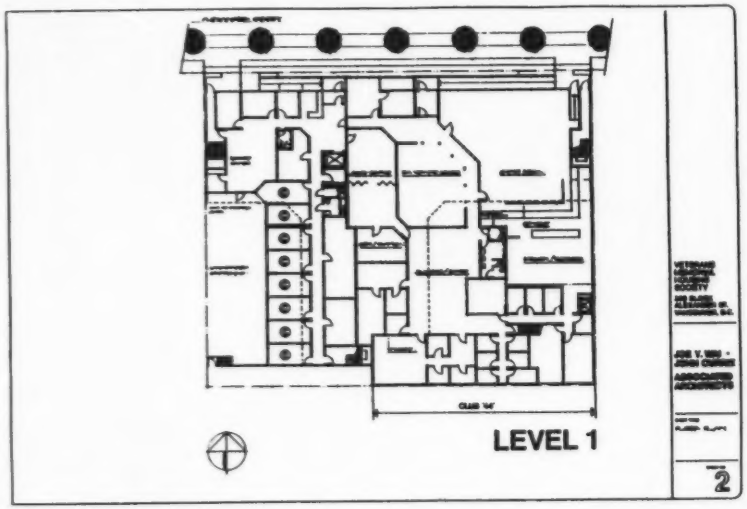
ZONES

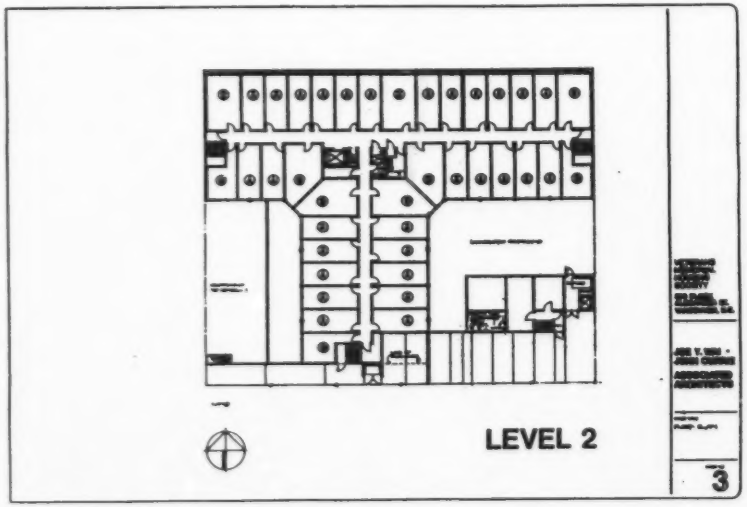
- HA 1 CHINATOWN HISTORIC AREA
- HA 2 GASTOWN HISTORIC AREA
- CD 1 COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT
- DEOD DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE
- RT 3 TWO FAMILY DWELLING
- M 1 INDUSTRIAL
- M 2 INDUSTRIAL

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

1. CARNEGIE LIBRARY
2. SALVATION ARMY
3. ST. JAMES SOCIAL SERVICES
4. THE LOOKOUT
5. MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCES
6. TRIAGE
7. EXISTING 'CLUB 44'
8. POLICE STATION
9. STRATHCONA SCHOOL & COMMUNITY CENTRE


VETERANS MEMORIAL HOUSING SOCIETY
200 BLOCK ALEXANDER ST. VANCOUVER, B.C.
JOE Y. WAI - JOHN CUTHBERT ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTS
5
UNIT PLANS
A
B
C
D
E
F


LEVEL 1
2

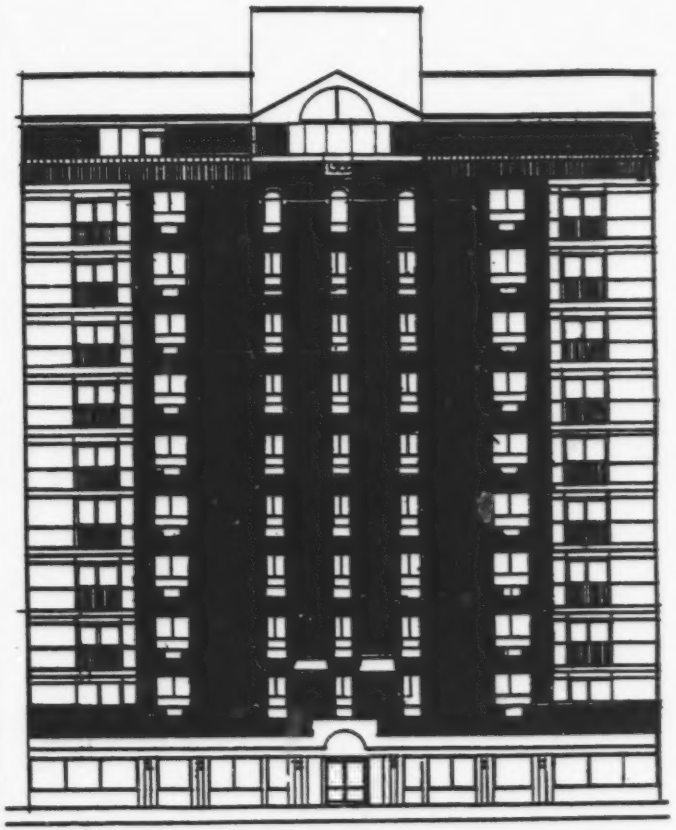

LEVEL 2
3

TORONTO, ONTARIO

90 Shuter Street: Security of Tenure for Low-Income Singles in a Rooming House Setting.

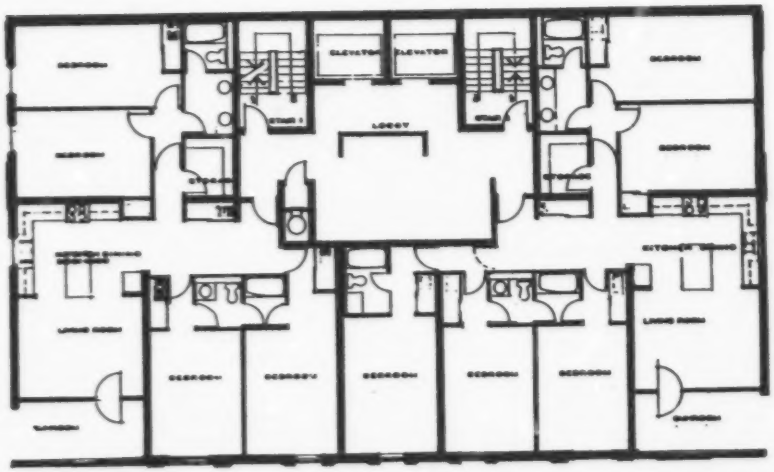
90 Shuter Street is a specially designed eleven storey apartment building in the downtown core based on the building form, management and social features of good rooming houses, to reverse the effects of inner city displacement. The clientele are the homeless who have been using emergency hostels as long-term housing and whose income is based on a variety of social assistance programmes which make it difficult for them to find and keep a home, and therefore stabilize their lives. In addition to quality, affordable housing, the residents have the support of community services provided both in the building and nearby. The design of the building provides maximum privacy, choice and the opportunity for groups and individuals to interact. Security of tenure, based on adequate resources is considered a necessary prerequisite for this type of permanent housing. The sponsors, the Homes First Society, is a community based charitable and non-profit organization which grew out of the experience of organizations providing and managing "public housing", and in meeting the needs of single persons displaced by urban redevelopment. Each of the 17 apartment units has four or five single rooms. These are large enough to be furnished as bed-sitters. A bed and dresser, built by residents of the complex, are provided. Each resident has private access to a bathroom which is shared with one other person. The rooms have individually controlled electric heat. The four or five rooms in each apartment share a kitchen and dining area, with an adjacent living room and sun room. The design is flexible and permits each group to tailor the spaces to their liking. The typical floors have been designed to accommodate people with certain types of handicaps (from fully featured handicapped facilities to minor adjustments). Each apartment has developed its own set of rules and expectations for behaviour, and the general building rules were developed with and by the residents. Shuter Street is close to public transportation, shopping, public recreation facilities and services which the residents are accustomed to using.

Funding for the project is diverse, and securing it has been problematic because of the question of jurisdictional responsibility concerning support housing in general and the nature of the client group in particular. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided the capital and operating funds under the National Housing Act (Section 56.1) special purpose housing allocation. The mortgage interest is being subsidised down to 2% interest with a 35 year amortization. The Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing provides funding under the Ontario Community Housing Assistance Programme which ensures affordable rents ($320 per month), and residents pay no more than 25% of their income in rent. The Provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services in conjunction with the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto cost-shares funding of on-site support staff through the Municipal Purchase of Counselling Programme under the General Welfare Assistance Act.

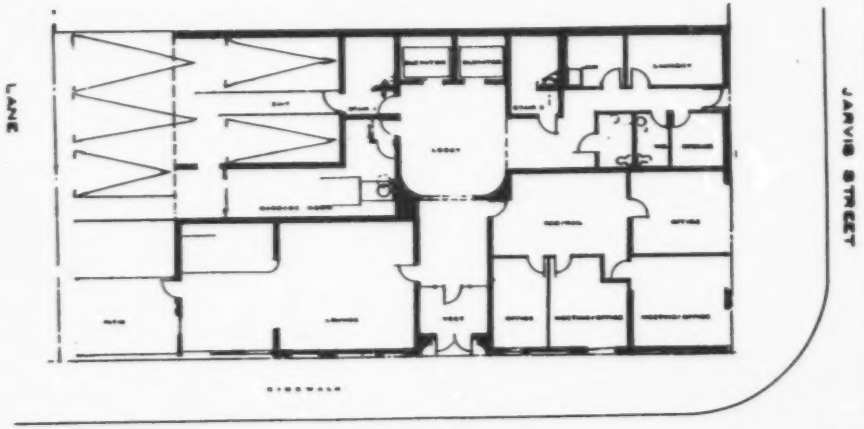


SOUTH ELEVATION

90 SHUTER STREET TORONTO, ONTARIO



TYPICAL FLOOR PLAN



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Auberge Communautairs du Sud-Ouest: Transitional Housing for Young People.

In the Province of Quebec, homelessness among women and youth has become an increasing source of concern to both government and charitable organizations. Innovative shelter initiatives are currently underway to reduce the vulnerability of these groups. Their problems stem, in part, from a lack of emergency as well as permanent, secure housing, and also from a lack of social support services, to mitigate the effects of unemployment, domestic violence, abuse, and particularly support for those with alcohol or substance dependencies. Despite the fact that the number of public housing units in the province has doubled in the past six years, there are approximately 45,000 people on waiting lists (15,000 in Montreal alone).

In Quebec, a major dimension of homelessness in the large metropolitan areas concerns the lack of emergency and temporary shelter, particularly as the stock of low cost rooming houses has diminished by over 4,000 units in the past five years, and many units in boarding homes do not conform to municipal building codes.

Young people are increasingly at risk of becoming homeless because single people are not eligible for public housing units, and existing emergency shelters are not equipped to deal with the problems facing this group - problems which require long-term, structural solutions to address unemployment, poverty, education, health and continuing counselling.

The situation facing young people in Quebec, and an innovative shelter initiative in southwest Montreal is described vividly by information provided by Quebec's provincial co-ordinator for IYSH activities, M. Claude Roy.

Depuis le début des années 80 le chômage devient un phénomène social de plus en plus inquiétant étant donné son ampleur et son aggravation presque constante: officiellement plus de 13% de la main d'oeuvre est à la recherche d'emplois au Québec. En chiffres absolus, cela veut dire qu'on compte plus de 400,000 chômeurs/euses au Québec. Les jeunes sont les plus touchés par le chômage; en juillet 1982 le taux de chômage parmi les 15-24 atteignant déjà 24%

Dans les quartiers du sud-ouest de Montréal soit St-Charles, St-Henri et Petite Bourgogne, on a émis 782 chèques d'aide sociale aux adultes de 18 à 30 ans aptes au travail dans le seul mois de mars 1983. Ces chiffres n'incluent pas: les assistés sociaux entre 18 et 30 ans possédant un certificat médical pour leur inaptitude au travail, les gens ignorant leurs droits à recevoir de l'aide sociale, les personnes qui, par fierté, refusent de s'y inscrire, les étudiants bénéficiaires de prêts et bourses et les chômeurs à faible revenu. La situation des jeunes adultes assistés sociaux est alarmante puisqu'ils reçoivent que $152.00 par mois. Une étude menée en mars 1984 par des nutritionnistes du Carrefour d'Education Populaire de Pointe St-Charles rapporte que les montants accordés par l'aide sociale ne permettent pas une alimentation saine. Selon cette recherche, il en coûte $125.00 par mois à un jeune adulte pour se nourrir, soit 84% de son revenu total. Ceci prouve bien que le jeune est confronté à un choix irréaliste; se loger ou se nourrir. Devant cette impasse, les jeunes arrondissent leur fin de mois par la vente de drogue, par la prostitution ou encore par du vol à l'étalage.

La mise en place de logements à prix modiques est une urgence pour ces adultes qui dépendent de leur famille ou de leurs amis pour se loger ou s'alimenter convenablement. Les personnes ne pouvant pas compter sur un de ces secours couchent dans des maisons d'hébergement ou dans les parcs. La dernière solution est la plus souvent utilisée puisqu'il n'y a que 72 lits sur toute l'Ile de Montréal pour accueillir ces personnes dans la rue. De plus, ces lits sont occupés à 30% par des gens du sud-ouest. D'après nous, ce taux est élevé compte tenu de l'éloignement de ces centres et du peu de ressources financières dont disposent les jeunes.

Face à ce problème, un groupe d'intervenants et de citoyens du quartier se rencontraient en février 1983 afin de réfléchir ensemble sur les avenues possibles dans lesquelles pourrait s'engager un regroupement éventuel de ces jeunes adultes de 18 à 30 ans.

La réponse fut unanime: l'idéal, ce serait que chaque jeune ait son appartement mais la situation critique des jeunes assistés sociaux oblige à envisager une solution communautaire du problème à moyen ou long terme.

Dès la fin de la saison estivale, le groupe entreprit la fondation du comité organisateur de ce qui s'appellera dorénavant l'Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest Inc. suite à une incorporation provinciale obtenue au cours de l'été.

Auberge Communautaire du Sud-Ouest

L'Auberge se veut donc un lieu physique d'hébergement à moyen et à long terme pour les jeunes assistés sociaux des quartiers du sud-ouest de Montréal. Il ne s'agit plus d'un dépannage ponctuel mais bien de donner une véritable chance à des jeunes assistés sociaux de se "sortir du trou", leur offrant ainsi l'appui et le temps nécessaires afin d'améliorer leur situation. Après concertation, trois objectifs généraux soutendent notre action:

1. Améliorer la condition de vie du jeune en répondant à ses besoins premiers (hébergement, réponse à ses problèmes de revenu...);

2. favoriser une vie communautaire qui permette une prise en charge du jeune par le jeune en organisant collectivement la vie de l'Auberge, tout en intégrant à cette vie communautaire toutes les dimensions du vécu quotidien;

3. encourager le jeune à trouver individuellement et/ou collectivement des solutions permanentes à ses problèmes économiques, favorisant ainsi une pleine autonomie et un retour sur le marché du travail.

Afin de mieux définir ce que devra être l'Auberge concrètement et comment elle devra fonctionner, nous nous dotons d'une structure organisationnelle bien spécifique. La formule retenue préférablement est celle d'un immeuble unique pouvant offrir jusqu'à 22 unités individuelles d'habitation. Chaque chambre devra être de dimension suffisante pour permettre l'organisation de la vie privée de chaque jeune hébergé.

Ces vingt-deux (22) chambres individuelles sont regroupées en 3 unités appelées îlots; chaque îlot est autonome quant à son organisation interne et se compose de six à huit (6 à 8) chambres, d'une salle commune et d'une cuisine qui lui est propre.

De ces trois îlots, un premier servira d'unité d'accueil, lieu de passage obligatoire avant d'avoir accès au service d'hébergement à moyen et long terme. Cette unité d'accueil permettra de répondre, d'une part, au besoin d'un séjour à court terme et, d'autre part, servira de lieu d'adaptation à la vie communautaire.

Une fois le séjour à l'accueil terminé, le jeune pourra dès lors profiter du service d'hébergement à moyen et long terme, si sa situation "psycho-socio-économique" le nécessite. A l'intérieur des îlots, l'organisation de la vie communautaire sera plus autonome. Les membres organiseront entre eux leur quotidien: achats alimentaires, cuisine, ménage, budgétisation des achats, etc. De même, les règlements internes de l'îlot seront négociés en groupe. Tous les problèmes afférant à la vie communautaire seront discutés au cours de la réunion hebdomadaire de l'îlot avec l'aide de l'animateur. Rappelons enfin que chaque îlot aura son ou ses animateurs qui assumeront une présence et un suivi auprès des jeunes et ce, sur une base permanente (24 heures/jour, 7 jours/semaine).

Par ailleurs, chaque jeune résident qui s'engagera à l'intérieur de la structure de vie communautaire de l'Auberge devra respecter les règlements internes et le code de vie du centre. Ainsi, les résidents devront obligatoirement participer aux rencontres hebdomadaires de planification et d'évaluation. De plus, ils s'engageront 15 heures/semaine à travailler à leur revalorisation personnelle et sociale par le truchement d'une recherche intensive d'emploi et/ou d'un stage de formation; ils devront également participer à l'organisation et à la vie active de l'Auberge. Enfin, ils seront appelés à faire preuve d'une réelle volonté de s'en sortir, se dotant de tous les outils nécessaires leur permettant d'acquérir une plus grande autonomie personnelle.

Alors que le nombre de jeunes assistés sociaux, vivant sous le seuil de la pauvreté, n'en finit plus d'augmenter, alors que le niveau de chômage chez les jeunes adultes atteint des plafonds encore inégalés, alors que le phénomène de la prostitution et de la clochardisation chez les 18-30 ans prend de plus en plus d'ampleur, nous demeurons viscéralement convaincus de la pertinence et de l'urgence d'instaurer un centre d'hébergement et d'entraide pour ces milliers de jeunes adultes laissés pour compte.

De part le caractère innovateur de notre projet (hébergement à moyen et long terme pour jeunes adultes de quartiers populaires), nous espérons pouvoir recueillir les sommes suffisantes nous permettant de faire un pas vers le mieux-être des jeunes adultes présentement découragés devant le peu d'alternatives que leur offrent le marché du travail et le contexte social actuel.

S'en sortir?

L'équipe aura également une responsabilité énorme vis-à-vis la nécessité que chaque membre se prenne en main et rebâtisse sa situation personnelle afin de quitter l'auberge dans une meilleure posture qu'à son arrivée.

Il faut insister sur le fait que si l'auberge est une ressource à long terme, elle ne doit pas être considérée comme une ressource permanente et chaque membre doit se servir de ce temps de passage pour améliorer sa situation personnelle et se prendre en main à l'extérieur de l'auberge.

OTTAWA, ONTARIO

506 Bronson: Municipally Provided Affordable Housing at a Human Scale in a Prime Location.

Low income single persons and childless couples in Ontario are not eligible for federal or provincial government housing assistance at a time when the traditional stock of low-income rooming houses has declined by over 80 percent in the last ten years. People using the available emergency shelters are increasingly becoming chronically homeless, moving within and between rooming houses and shelters. There are increasingly more younger women and men trapped in a revolving door of poverty and insecure, inaffordable shelter alternatives. In response, the city of Ottawa Non-Profit Housing Corporation (City Living), has begun to create a designed rooming house stock to replace what has been lost in the market. Since its incorporation, City Living has grown from a Municipal Housing Company which managed just over 1,500 units for families and seniors to one of the largest non-profit housing corporations in Canada. At the end of 1985, its portfolio consisted of more than 3,200 units. The varied federal and provincial government programmes which City Living has utilized over the years, as well as the City of Ottawa's independent housing initiatives, have resulted in the provision of a wide range of building types, sizes of units and rental levels to accommodate the needs of low and moderate income households, although the local demand for affordable rental housing remains high.

The Bronson Avenue Rooming House (Maison de Chambres) is the first new rooming house constructed by City Living. It is located in a prime location within Dalhousie Ward with amenities and support services within walking distance or a short bus ride.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation provided funding under the Canada Rental Supply Program with a grant for a 15 year interest free loan of $391,020 for the construction of the project. The loan was contingent on the City of Ottawa contribuuting at least 20% of the total capital costs ($662,400). The total cost of the project at completion is approximately $1,200,000. The project was planned to operate on a roughly break-even basis with rents averaging $205 per month.

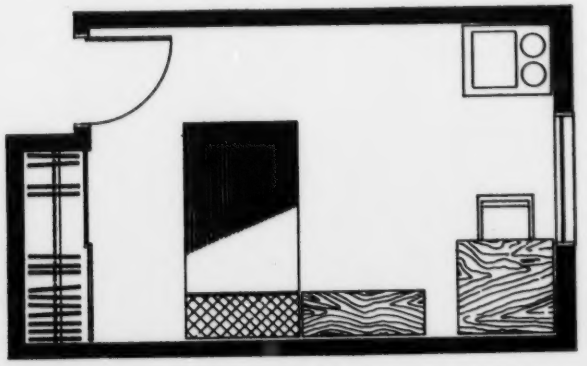
The rooming house contains 55 rooms with a one-bedroom unit for a resident superintendent. Each unit is furnished and equipped with kitchenette facilities. There is a common room, laundry facility, common bathrooms and storage areas for the residents. A recreational programme has been established partially in response to tenant requests and with the assistance of the Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa-Carleton Branch, which if successfull, will lead to the introduction of a life/social skills programme for residents and educational workshops for caretaking staff.

Policy guidelines for the operation of City Living rooming houses are based on the following objectives:

- to maintain a supply of affordable housing for low income single persons in the city;
- to ensure that City Living rooming houses meet sound property management standards;

- to maintain a healthy and secure living environment;
- to maintain a liaison with the neighbourhood and community support services for purposes of consultation and referral.

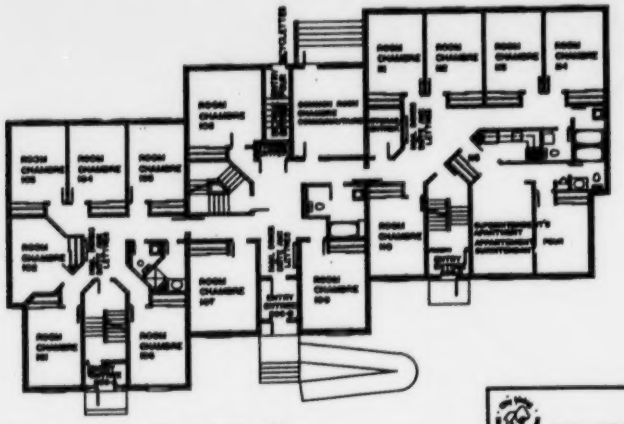
The target groups to be housed are: low-income singles, under 50 years of age, including transient men and women, marginally employed (students are considered low priority), with preference given to applicants who are permanent residents of Ottawa. The residents must be self-sufficient and capable of taking care of themselves. Additional selection criteria include: capacity to share close living quarters with other residents, must be at least 18 years of age, and proof of income or verification of direct payment of rent is required at the time of renting. The Maison de Chambres demonstrates the success of providing affordable, quality accommodation at a human scale, in an appropriate location, through local government initiative.



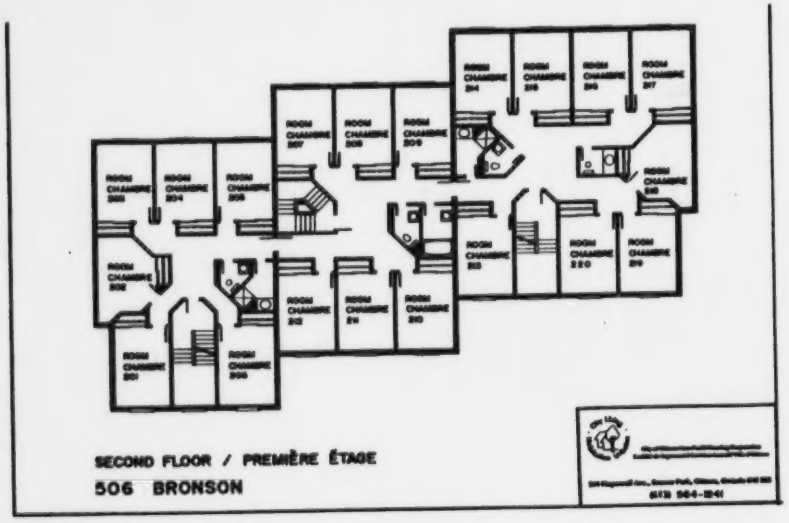
TYPICAL ROOM LAYOUT

MAISON DE CHAMBRES
506 BRONSON
ROOMING HOUSE

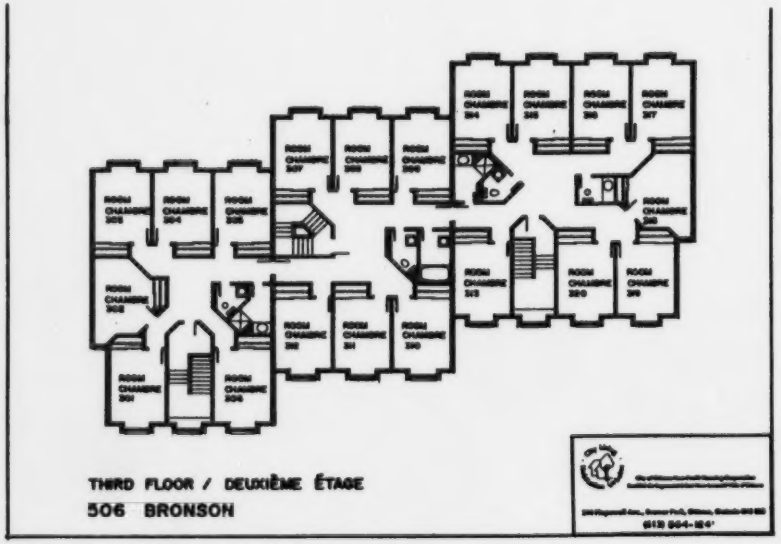
City Living
Habitation Urbaine



GROUND FLOOR / REZ DE CHAUSSÉE
506 BRONSON



SECOND FLOOR / PREMIÈRE ÉTAGE
506 BRONSON



THIRD FLOOR / DEUXIÈME ÉTAGE
506 BRONSON

Homelessness will only be removed by restoring the individual or the family affected to an active and full participation in the mainstream of Canada's urban society. Self respect coupled with marketable skills and urgent crisis support based on selected continuing assistance including health and education, ought to return individuals and families to Canada's prevailing mainstream to participate fully in the market economy. To date, varied experience has shown that most individuals and families considered homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, can look after themselves and their needs, and once again become self-reliant and effective members of Canada's urban society, given a chance to orient their life, learn new skills and attitudes, and being helped over an economic or social crisis; this will result in the restoration of self-confidence.

Homelessness is not hopeless and the pervasive phenomenon of the homeless can be resolved in Canada through a partnership of initiative involving governments, voluntary agencies and the homeless themselves, providing shelter and homes together with ready access to social and economic services to return the individual and family to a productive role in an urban society.